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VITAL ELEMENTS OF PREACHING

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VITAL ELEMENTS OF PREACHING

BY

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IN AUBURN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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"THE WORK OF PREACHING," AND "THE PREACHER"

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To

JAMES STEVENSON RIGGS

COLLEAGUE, NEIGHBOR,

FRIEND OF MANY YEARS

PREFACE

THESE lectures were given at the University of Chicago, in the summer term of nineteen hundred and twelve, and for three years to senior classes at Auburn Seminary. The response of students encourages the hope that they may be helpful to a wider circle of readers.

To those who have read the author's previous works on preaching, "The Work of Preaching," and "The Preacher," the present book will seem a nearer approach to the secret of effective preaching.

"The Work of Preaching" dealt with the sources and formation of the sermon for the present age; "The Preacher" placed emphasis upon a vital, spiritual personality in giving the message; "The Vital Elements of Preaching" touches the temper of the man both as to the truth and the lives of his hearers. Preaching is a social virtue. "Nothing can be more fundamental to the preacher than his humanity." The deepest needs and desires of the age must be felt in his life, if his word interprets aright the Gospel of the new man.

The book discusses the psychology of preaching, though without formal and philosophical analysis. It always has in mind the question, How shall we speak so as to help men into the largest life? It is sent forth with the hope that it may help many into fuller faith in the divineness of preaching.

ARTHUR S. HOYT.

AUBURN, N.Y.,
May 15, 1914.

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LECTURE I. THE CALLED MAN

ISAIAH 6:1–8. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

LECTURE I

The Called Man

It is a great thing to have a large view of truth, and know one's relation to it; to have a clear view of life, to see life clear, and to see life whole, and to know one's part in it.

The Christian ministry is a calling that depends upon its vision of truth and life, and its sense of relation to them. The older divines emphasized the divine call to the ministry. Whatever be the theory, the conviction of calling must be none the less sure. We are here because we feel that we are chosen men.

I am not sure that the Christian preacher is chosen of God more than other men. There has been rightly a great widening of the idea of service. God is not only the God of the hills, but also of the valleys. The Incarnation tells us that God has cleansed human life and nothing is to be called common or unclean. All life may be full of God and all work his service.

> "Honest toil is holy service; faithful work is praise and prayer."

The largest duty is the sanctification of the commonplace. The priesthood of the believer is the New Testament conception of life, and the realization of this thought in the manifold ways of life is perhaps the strongest reason for the lessened number of preachers and the forces of righteousness beyond the limits of the church.

No doubt Mr. Hughes and Mr. Roosevelt are chosen men quite as much as Mr. Beecher or Mr. Moody. There are chosen sons of Science and Literature as well as of Religion. Burns saw the spirit of Scotland calling him.

> "I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
> Delighted with the dashing roar;
> Or when the North his fleecy store
> Drove through the sky,
> I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
> Struck thy young eye."

And Wordsworth felt himself a dedicated spirit. He must follow the call of poetry or sin greatly.

No man can do his work as he ought, unless he feels that he is where God wishes him to be; unless he have sooner or later the divine sanction on his work. The preacher, above all other men to-day, because of the nature of his work as a ministry to the soul and because of its peculiar difficulty and danger,

needs the assurance that he is called of God.

So, in the vital elements of preaching, the man comes first. And it is well for us to study the called man, as found especially in the experience of Isaiah.

Some of the most interesting and impressive parts of the Bible are the records of the calling out of men for some especial service. What variety in these calls as to age and social condition! Amos, the prophet of social righteousness, was called from his flocks and herds, the shepherd of Tekoa. Hosea, the prophet of the divine betrothal, was a poet and a patriot, a man of noble gifts and large experiences. Moses was trained in the most splendid court of his times, and Elijah, rough and bold, flitted from court to desert in coarse and unkept raiment; Peter and John were the untutored fishermen of Galilee, and Paul was the master of the highest culture of his age.

Samuel heard the call of God as a young man in the Tabernacle, while Moses, an old man in the desert, felt the divine impulse that must be followed. John brought the enthusiasm and the sensitiveness of youth to the Master's school, while Matthew left the habits and work of manhood to follow and proclaim the new teaching.

The history of the Christian pulpit furnishes countless parallels to this variety in God's calls. There is no fixed age or condition for God's use. While the special demands of the modern pulpit call for youth and long training, God has always called his special messengers in ways men have little thought. Many a preacher like Paul has not been taught his message of man.

Men like Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose; Bossuet, Bourdaloue; Barrow, Jeremy Taylor, Liddon; Brooks, — had the advantage of wealth and social position, the most famous schools and teachers; while Bunyan and Spurgeon, Parker and Moody, rose like Lincoln from the undistinguished mass, not by favor of birth or school, but by the irresistible force of their own nature and vision. Spurgeon, Parker, Maclaren were preachers while still in their teens. Chrysostom began at 39, and Augustine at 36. A man may begin his prophetic work at any age. But a test of his call is his desire to make good his deficiencies. John Knox began the study of Greek at 42, and then turned to Hebrew at 49.

I think the experiences of the prophets often come as personal and practical lessons to the modern preacher. The Apostles had

the extraordinary work of establishing the infant Church, of putting the fact and truths of Christ in imperishable form. In a certain sense that peculiar work can never be repeated. But the work of the prophets is ever going on. They were identified with their people. They felt the social oneness of the community. They came from the people; they spoke to them, and their fate was involved in the fate of the nation. The prophetic office was to their age what the pulpit is to this. They spoke for God. They were the moral and religious teachers of their age. They sustained personal religion. Like a rock in the desert, to use the striking and beautiful figure of Isaiah, they kept men from being overwhelmed by the silt of the desert sands, by the drift of the evil times. Under their influence fruitful lives sprang up, and their words of hope were the shadow of a rock in a weary land. "The Lord hath given me the tongue of a disciple that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary."

The prophets were the greatest force in the higher life of the nation. Principal George Adam Smith suggestively says, in "The Prophets as Preachers to their own Times": "Almost everywhere the prophets

began to speak to the new generations; from the time of the Reformation to our own, there never has been a city of Protestant Europe which has been stirred to higher ideals of justice and purity, without the reawaking of those ancient voices which declared to Jacob his sin and to Israel his transgression. The fidelity which sought to discover what the prophets actually meant to the men of their own time was rewarded by the inspiration of their message to the men of all times."

The calls of the prophets, from their far-away tone, may seem to us exceptional and unusual. But look through the wrappings of circumstance and I am sure we shall find the truth common to all men. The truths that made Isaiah a prophet may be the very same that call us into our work and sustain us in it. And I cannot think of an efficient pulpit living under *less* heavenly motives and sanctions. *The called man has a vision of God, a vision of human need, and a vision of opportunity.*

Some vision of God is the first element of a man's call. Isaiah was twenty years old when he had the vision of God. He was a native of Jerusalem, probably of royal birth. He knew the court and the social life of the

city. He saw the outer prosperity and devotion to religious form, but he saw also the inner corruption, the avarice and cruelty and lust of the leaders, the moral dulness and brutality of the multitude.

Uzziah, the great king, had been smitten by Jehovah. He lay at last dead in his palace. The young nobleman Isaiah passed with others into the chamber of death. His imagination was oppressed by the stillness of the palace. This, then, was the end of greatness. The glory of man was only for the dust. He passes from the palace to the temple. He goes into the place where the Invisible and Eternal is worshipped. The forms of human pride and splendour vanish; even the ways by which man would express his sense of the Infinite pass from sight, and God alone remains. He fills the temple in majesty and glory. God is the high and holy one.

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above his head stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly, and one cried unto another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the

Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6 : 1–3).

The glory of God, the high and holy one, the transcendent God, — that was the first message to Isaiah. That his whole life is controlled by the vision is seen by his prophecy. As all knowledge is vision to Paul, from his great experience on the Damascus road, so Isaiah is ever trying vainly to express the conception of the Eternal One. "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so are his thoughts above our thoughts."

The majesty and holiness of God are the first message. But the *nearness* of God is also taught. There is some slight foretaste of the graciousness of Christ's revelation, not to overwhelm the finite spirit, but to draw it to the higher. "The earth is full of his glory." And that the further message of God's nearness was learned by the prophet is shown by his words. Where else before Christ is there such expression of the particular and personal interest of God in all that concerns his creatures? "O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name. Thou hast been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the

terrible ones is as a storm against the wall" (Isaiah 25 : 1–4).

God's pity for his people, his interest in everything that concerns human life, comes from the vision of his majesty.

Every called man has the vision of God, this all-possessing sense of the presence of God. And life will be a call, a mission, a divine service, in proportion to the fulness and vividness of the vision. Both thoughts of God are needed to make the strong call, the majesty of God, and the nearness of God, his transcendence and his immanence.

In the thought of to-day the *immanence* of God is emphasized. He is in the processes of nature and in the ways of men.

> "He is closer to us than breathing,
> Nearer than hands and feet."

His highest expression is in humanity. God does as the best human life would wish to do.

But there may be a weakness and littleness without the sense of the glory of God. God is too great to be put into postulates of reason. And in the presence of the stupendous mystery of being, it should not be hard to sympathize with Matthew Arnold's hesitation to call the Almighty God a per-

son, as we understand that term. A democratic age is tempted to pull the loftiest conceptions down to its own level. Men have somewhat lightly said that in a democratic society men elect their own God. In a critical and flippant age, when it is easier to jest than to pray, when the most sacred things are treated with irreverent touch, there is need of the conception of God as a high and Holy One. If modern theology, in advance of the old, has dwelt upon the kinship of God and man, do we not need the vision of the infinite perfections of God, to solemnize and deepen our thoughts, to make us walk humbly, to give us instant and complete obedience?

In manifold ways the vision of God may come to men. Many a soul has had a new sense of God, which has subdued the whole nature, before some majestic force of Nature. We lift up our eyes to the hills; their lofty forms suggest the mystery and sublimity of God. Coleridge's hymn in the Valley of Chamouni is the expression of many a devout soul.

"O dread and silent mount, I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought. Entranced in prayer,
I worshipped the Invisible alone."

Some striking providence, as in Luther's case, some critical event in which the life had seemed as helpless as a bit of driftwood on the illimitable sea, has made God known.

God is found even in the crowded ways of men.

> "His heart is millions merged in one,
> And thro the world it beats."

Devout lives are a mirror that reflect the beauty of the Holy One. Happy the man whose earliest lessons were of God, to whom the thought of home suggests the thought of God, who has never departed from the Father's face.

It is a commonplace to say that the study of Christ, thought of him, and service for him, all that belongs to his kingdom, should make God real. The willing learner will have moments when the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ, and all else is nought to that vision.

To have the sense of divine call, it must be a *personal* vision of God. We must use the ordinary means of spiritual knowledge, — study, meditation, prayer, duty, service; but every soul cries for that sense of God, that inner light that might be likened to an immediate vision. Men may call it mystical;

it has been the possession of all great souls, it has been the gift and the authority of all the great voices of the Church. When the late Dr. Henry B. Smith of Union Seminary was crossing the Atlantic on his way to Germany, as a young man, restless with current thoughts about the Gospel, dreading the future and desiring above all to be true, he had such a vision of Christ as the heart of revelation, as the centre and soul and goal of human progress, that he never doubted again.

The called man must have the vision of human need. It will be his own need first. The vision of God always makes a man feel his sin. That was the thought of Moses in the silence of the desert as he caught the vision of God and his call. "Who am I?" The young priest Ezekiel felt the same way. When in the vision he has given us in the first chapter, suited to the subtle and profound nature of the man, he had some conception of the glory of God, he fell flat on his face in the dust. Peter, the manliest and frankest of the Apostles, before the sudden vision of the supernal nature of Jesus, said impulsively, "Depart from me, Lord! for I am a sinful man." And Isaiah, before the vision of the High and Holy One, with the

voices of the thrice holy in his ears, felt his own sin. "Woe is me: I am a man of unclean lips." The sense of imperfection is the attitude of honest, reverent manhood. Every added vision of God will deepen this sense of sin. Every true conception of Christ will sharpen a man's self-estimate, and that will add to the thought of ill-desert.

Some of your experience may be as that of one I knew in my student days. His life had been one of natural piety. No sharp, dark moments had ever broken the smooth and easy flow of the years. And now he was going forth to his work, but with no mighty compulsion. He felt that his experience should be deepened if he were to have a message of life. He prayed and struggled for a more vivid conception of Christ; and it came through a look into his own heart, at the depth of selfishness and unbelief, and a new sense of need and the divine forgiveness. I doubt whether any man is called to preach the Gospel of Redemption who has not felt in some deep sense the guilt of sin and his need of pardon and cleansing. Is not this the trouble with the easy descriptions of the religion of the future — religion the achievement of the cultivated few,

and not the necessary life of every man, the ignoring of the deep, elemental struggle between the good and evil, that spiritual progress is a battle with the beast?

The vision of human need is not only personal, but social. It identifies self with the sin and suffering and struggle of men. "And I dwelt amongst a people of unclean lips." There is no sense of superiority, and separation from men. The people were his people and their life was his life. His patriotism was a part of his religion. He felt the shame of the national sin as his own. He was identified in a thousand ways with the men about him.

A sense of social solidarity is a part of every full vision of human need. We are part of a people of unclean lips. We are involved in the weakness and guilt of the age. The progress of civilization so far is over the buried hopes and broken bodies of multitudes. The mark of blood, the blood of the helpless and the innocent, is on the clothes we wear, and the food we take. The growing social consciousness must give a more penetrative and inclusive definition of sin, a keener sensitiveness to human relation and action. To us belongeth confusion of face. The sense of social sin

should keep us from all hardness and censoriousness and self-righteousness, and fill us with a divine pity for the multitudes.

The sense of lack, of moral defect, the humility that knows and confesses it has not attained, is the condition of all growth, use, leadership in religious life. There is no conflict between true self-respect and the deepest humility. In fact, the nobler expression of self is born of the meek and lowly spirit. A man is never so much himself as when he bows before God. A man must be beaten out of all self-conceit before God can make any large use of him. The child-like spirit is the path of spiritual greatness. A self-satisfied man cannot understand God's voice, and is often saying "not so, Lord" to the simplest commands of Christ.

God pardons the humble soul. The joy of forgiveness must precede any real teaching of transgressors God's ways. The moral majesty and the eternal compassion of God must be felt before his word shall command the life. The live coal from the altar touches the lips. Iniquity is taken away and sin is purged. Fellowship is restored. Love makes the soul ready. Love constrains. Nothing can be too great for love to offer.

The called man has *the vision of opportunity.*

"Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" You will notice that it is an invitation, and not a command. God does not wish any unwilling messengers, any slaves, driven to their tasks by the lash, but sons, friends, co-workers, who regard service as the privilege of love, and coöperation with the Master as the highest human honor. We need to bring all the motives to bear upon our work and not to despise the lowest. The stern sense of duty may need often to compel us or hold us to our tasks. And duty is the voice of God, and "wears the Godhead's most benignant grace." But the power that most effectively constrains is *love*. Phillips Brooks compares the secondary motives of the ministry (such as the joy of work, the love of influence, the perception of moral order, the concern for truth) and the chief motive (the realized value of the human soul, the passion for humanity) to the staff around the commanding officer.

"'I am not convinced by what you say. I am not sure but that I can answer every one of your arguments,' said a man, with whom a preacher had been pleading; 'but there is one thing which I confess I cannot understand. It puzzles me, and makes me feel a power in what you say. It is why you

should care enough for me to take all this trouble, and to labour with me as if you cared for my soul.' It is a power which every man must feel. It inspires the preacher; and his hearers, catching its influence, become softened and ready to receive the truth. It is strength in the arm which strikes, and tenderness in the rock which receives the blow." ("Lectures on Preaching," page 257.)

Isaiah saw the need of his people. He felt their tragic failure to live as the chosen of God. He saw the opportunity to give the word of warning, of judgment, of comfort and hope. The soul of the prophet responded to the call. "Here am I. Send me." There was entire freedom, and entire committal.

The vision of God and of human need is our opportunity. We cannot fail to see it as we look at modern life. Men all around us, reckless of their gifts, trying to satisfy the craving of the immortal spirit with a fools' Paradise; multitudes in conventional religious life, who have no vital faith; who have lost the way, and need some one to show them the Father; multitudes more, so pressed by the struggle of life that the soul seems to have dropped out; the neglected on all our frontiers; those scattered on the mountains as sheep having

no shepherd; the congested masses of great cities, who live sore lives, dumb and numb under their low sky; and the peoples who do not know that the Sun of Righteousness has risen, with healing on his wings. Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? Here am I. Send me!

> "Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer him,
> Be jubilant, my feet."

To be a called man, to have the sense of the chosen of God! This gives the worth, the dignity, the purpose of life. Several years ago, in returning from a Western vacation, by the Great Lakes, the steamer stopping in the early evening at Detroit, I found myself in a square before the Russell House, listening to a street preacher.

The motley throng that gathered is always of dramatic interest, — working men and women, going home with their pails, loungers from the corners, drawn by idle curiosity, women of the town, and here and there a man, going out to dine. And through all indifference and interruption the preacher held his appointed way, with a purpose and a passion that did its arresting and convincing work.

In the midst of the sermon he stopped,

and began the song with the familiar refrain, — "Since Jesus is mine, I'm the child of a King." Many a time since then has the voice of the street preacher been God's word: in moments of weariness, when the soul shrank from the pitiful contrast between the ideal and the actuality, and in moments of moral failure, when the whole sky of life seemed overcast, have sounded the brave, cheery words of the street preacher, "Since Jesus is mine, I'm the child of a King."

We can never fail, as long as we hold fast to our sonship, as we have the assurance that we are the called of God. We can never be satisfied with some low, unmanly content. We shall never lose the spirit of the learner, the mind of the true prophet. It sends purpose, vigorous, consecrated purpose, through all the veins of life.

Is the preacher's work to-day hard? Are the multitudes indifferent to his voice? Is it a difficult and unrewarded task to be a true prophet? "All noble things are difficult," was a favorite saying of Dr. Blaikie. "Those who have the true heroic and chivalric spirit of Christianity will not be repelled, but drawn by difficulties," says a recent British Weekly, commenting on the

career of Dr. Campbell Morgan of Westminster.

"Dr. Campbell Morgan, when he had at his command the pulpits of the richest churches in England and America, deliberately chose Westminster Chapel, without guarantee of any kind, and his example has heightened and brightened alike the ideals of ministers and of laymen."

No prophet ever lived in a more trying time or had a more difficult service than Isaiah. Yet he lives in all the growing life of the Kingdom of God.

LECTURE II. THE OPEN DOOR.

I Corinthians 16 : 9. "A great door, and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."

LECTURE II

The Open Door

Paul could not get by Ephesus. He had to stop and work. "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." The field irresistibly appealed to him. It was not an easy field. There could not have been a harder field in the Roman Empire. Ephesus was the centre of heathen philosophies, and the workshop for heathen idols. Philosophy, religion, trade, social custom were all against him. But Paul was a brave man, as every preacher of the Gospel ought to be. He was stirred by danger. It challenged his manhood. He knew that opposition was proof of the vitality of the Gospel, and the witness of human need. He put the door and the adversaries together. "A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."

Door is the simplest and boldest word for *opportunity*. The very difficulty and opposition that Paul met made the opportunity. And this is my theme, that the very things

that make preaching so hard to-day *constitute the special opportunity of the preacher.*

I. What are the adversaries to our work? What forces are hostile to the modern pulpit? It is always dangerous to attempt the analysis of one's own age. It is too much like attempting a self-estimate. It is apt to be complacently laudatory, or morbidly critical. There are many that heckle the Church, that proclaim preaching a lost art, that turn from the pulpit to other forms of service; and there are others who resent criticism as denial of faith, who glorify things as they are, who are never stirred by divine discontent.

We are so much a part of our own age that it is hard to objectify, and get an honest and adequate view of it. It will be for the future to look at us with reason, and not with prejudice, and so to understand us fully. But some facts are so evident — like deep gulleys, ploughed across our plains by mountain freshets — that we must take account of them. All thoughtful men agree in regard to them. They seem to be adversaries to the pulpit. I use familiar terms: the materialistic spirit, the critical temper, the social unrest.

(*a*) A subtle wave of materialism has

swept over our age, it might almost be called a tidal wave. It is not philosophic materialism, for the thoughtful denial of the spiritual is rare. But it is a practical materialism, an absorbing interest in the things of this world and this life. Charles Kingsley called it the most sensuous age since the Northern tribes overran the Roman Empire. President Tucker has expressed it well when he says: "Not only is there more of the world than at any previous time, but most of the things in the world are worth more. One cannot calculate by just how much the valuation of the world is increased. The moral effect of this increase lies in the appeal which the world of to-day makes to sense, rather than to faith. In spite of the great contrasts in material condition, no one can mistake the satisfaction which men take in the material world as they know it, as they possess it. With some it is a purely sordid gratification, the mere sensual enjoyment of prosperity; with others it is the satisfaction which comes from the opportunity of search and struggle, the hot competition of the business world. With others still it is the joy of investigation, and physical research, the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge. We cannot overestimate

the fact that the world, this physical world, means more to us than it ever meant to living men. Never before did men possess so many lands, or subdue so many seas. Never before did men know so well the secret of wealth. And never before have there been open to them so many provinces in the invisible realms of matter."

As in Shakespeare's time, the sudden opening of the world led to an intense interest in life, as seen in the drama, so the conquest of earth and sky and sea, the dominion of man over nature, has for the moment dimmed the spiritual eye. At least, it has made the spiritual world less real and controlling. Life here and now is the supreme good. And the stage, and the novel, whatever tells us of life, and gives us all its sensations, are effective rivals of the pulpit and the sermon.

This spirit has special power in our own land, from the eager climate, the quickening commingling of races, and the new fields of adventure and achievement not yet closed, as in older lands. Take the two forms of the materialistic spirit — commercialism, and the love of pleasure. Business is the chief interest of our people. It affects even the higher phases of our life. Education has

changed its emphasis from the cultural value to the practical. A pleasant critic of our life has recently said:

"The great educationist with us is often a great scholar. In America he is a pioneer in his own profession. Practical rather than theoretical ability is demanded in all fields." It has been well called "the stone age of the college." It is not less so in the state. The policy of the states is industrial and economic. The critical points of world-politics are the questions of the new fields of trade. And even the Church feels it. The same English observer says: "American preachers are compelled to become the engineers, rather than the prophets of religion." Churches are too apt to be judged by the splendour of their buildings, and the wealth of their pews. It was said of one of our noble ministers, who had done heroic work upon our frontiers, and in the congested centres of great cities, but now in middle life is the pastor of a prosperous people, "Our friend, you know, has a splendid field now. Why, he is the pastor of the Ivory soap men!" The good man who made the remark, and the men thus referred to, would be the first to repudiate such a commercial view of life, nevertheless unwittingly the heart spoke.

It's a straw, showing the direction of the current.

> "The world is too much with us.
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."

And *pleasure* men will have at any cost. They ransack the earth for new delights. The tables of Lucullus never ministered to the palate as all the zones of to-day. Old restraints and habits of home and worship and religious service are relaxed or broken. It is not a true optimism to ignore the fact. Look at the pews a pleasant Sunday morning, and you can tell what people are owners of automobiles. Mr. Emerson was not much of a Puritan, and yet he knew the value of one day devoted especially to religion. One rainy Sunday Mrs. Emerson permitted the children to play battledore and shuttlecock. When their father heard the noise, he opened the door and said: "Such a thing has never been known since New England existed, and I'm not going to have it in my house." We can tell how far we have come when the grandchildren of Emerson and Holmes and Lowell think nothing of playing a tennis match or ball game Sunday afternoon.

My college chum recently showed me a

list of seventy men, all reputable business and professional men of a great city, willing to do anything for him personally, willing to support the Church through their wives and daughters, but rarely darkening the doors themselves. So pressed by cares, so feeling the killing pace of the age, that they demanded one day of freedom, and of play. I am noting facts, tendencies, but it should be said in passing that the tendency is not necessarily irreligious. It is partly a reaction from the legal strictness of Puritanism, and in some degree, perhaps, due to the widening conception of religion, regarding all true life as religious, and whatever will make a strong body and a light heart as essentially pleasing to God. It is certain, however, that the pressure of work and the lure of pleasure make men dull to the voice of the preacher.

The *critical temper* of the age often seems a foe to the pulpit; at least, it makes its work more difficult. Old creeds are dissolved in many minds, and a vital faith has not taken definite and positive form. The current thought has passed into a proverb that it makes no difference what a man believes if his life is only right. And even within the Christian society, the preacher

is not sure to meet assent to the statements of the most fundamental facts and truths of the Gospel. The preacher's word is not received because he is a preacher and the spokesman of a church.

It is the critical attitude toward all external authority, the inevitable attendant of the democratic movement and the scientific spirit. The lowest man has found his soul and asserts his right, and not seldom revolts against the seeming restrictions of his person. Life is good, and if man were only free to follow his soul, the way of truth would be found.

And the effort to find an orderly unity to the world has led to the scientific view of life and the doctrine of development, a new view of the universe, a new philosophy of human history. Men search for origins of ideas and institutions. They trace their growth. They are dealing with secondary causes, and may forget the Divine Life back of all, and in all. They apply the same laws of literary and historical criticism to our sacred books, and trace the development of our religion, and compare its ideals and claims with ethnic faiths.

One cannot mistake the temper of the modern mind towards former conceptions

of religion and the worth of the pulpit. Literature is the surest interpretation of life, and it is not hard to read its spirit. We are greatly indebted to our essayists for quickened thought and purified taste, but they have not always been the teachers of faith. Carlyle hit the hollow mockeries of the world with his great cast-iron words, but he was a Calvinistic sceptic who found it hard to think of God in terms of personal will and love. Emerson was an extreme individualist. He had faith in his own soul and cared not for the past and the voices of other men. He was a fearless experimenter. Nothing to him was sacred or profane. "I build to-day, to tear down to-morrow." And to Matthew Arnold the old dogmatic faith had been blown away by the age-spirit.

Our great poets have been men of faith, but the lesser voices are full of the questioning note. One cannot forget the sensitive and sincere Arthur Hugh Clough, the poet "stung with Life's unrest," foiled "with riddles dark, and cloudy aims," or Henley, who can only cling to his "unconquerable soul," or James Thomson, in his gloomy temple where all the voices are dumb because "they have no truth to tell."

Our novelists have given us beautiful and pathetic scenes of life and cleansing glimpses of the heart, but rarely have they been the teachers of religion. Life is a tragic struggle against a poor sort of Fate, not the discipline and unfolding of a plan of infinite good. To George Eliot, God was a sort of Brocken shadow, reflecting on a giant scale the hopes and fears of men.

And this spirit of question has touched all sorts and conditions of men. Men who know little of critical theories are affected by the results. They draw the conclusion, however illogical, that if all the Bible narratives are not literally true, the Bible can be no word of God to them. And so it is the fashion of the age to take nothing on authority. In the Church and outside of it the temper is critical towards religious teaching, not one of ready and glad acceptance. And so life is not so receptive of truth, or responsive to the ventures of faith. Dr. Henry van Dyke has keenly and wittily said that the sign of the age is an interrogation point, its coat of arms a question mark rampant, over three Bishops dormant!

And *social unrest* marks the civilized world, and has acute form in our own land. There

have been the rapid loosening of old ties and the massing of men under new conditions, many times fatal to justice and happy life. The personal relation in work has lessened through great organizations and absentee owners. A new patrician class has grown up in democracy, with all the power of the old, and without their sense of responsibility. There are gulfs between classes and contrasts of condition the greatest the world has ever seen. Dr. Gladden's words are hardly extreme: "No such orgy of extravagant expenditure has ever greeted the eyes of men as that on which the world has been looking in Democratic America during the last quarter of a century. The workers have grown weary and bitter and reckless and despairing as they have watched this growth. In their narrow lot, in their struggle to keep a roof over their heads, and to maintain themselves and their children, they will go great lengths." Witness the frequent contests in the labour world and the persistent advocacy and growth of radical theories that would change the form of society.

The spirit of organized labour is indifferent to the Church and often hostile to it. Labour leaders are rarely identified with the Church.

The meetings of labour unions are commonly on Sunday, and devotion to them is a substitute for the Church. Men find in the labour movement the idealism that to them is a religion. The Christianity of the Church is misunderstood and often thought a foe to their good. A multitude of men care no more about the worship and service of the Church than about last year's weather reports. There are a hundred thousand young Jews in New York whose only heaven is the earthly paradise promised by Socialism. Miss Jane Addams was asked to speak to the ministers of Chicago on the relation of the working man to the Church; and she startled her hearers by saying that there was no relation. The average working man did not know that there was a Church.

Are there many adversaries? Has the preacher fallen upon perilous times?

II. There's an open door. There never was a better time to live, never a more effectual door into the real life of the world. And the very adversaries mark the opportunity for the prophetic and devoted preacher.

The conquest of the world that makes earthly interest so absorbing is the conquest of mind. Christianity that teaches the worth of the individual man and has so quickened

his power has given him the hundred arms for the mastery of Nature. The material progress and so the absorbing interest in the earth and the present life is the proof of the soul of man. And the soul will assert itself. There are abundant signs that the material levels of life are too stifling an air. Knowledge and power and pleasure will never satisfy the spirit. The very abandon of pleasure is the sign of the craving of the soul. The very restlessness of the age is the sign of an unsatisfied heart. "If thou knewest the gift of God," might be said to many a life to-day as Jesus said it to the woman of Sychar. Money cannot heal a wounded conscience or cure a broken heart.

> "'There is no God,' the foolish saith,
> But none, 'There is no sorrow';
> And Nature oft the cry of faith,
> In bitter need will borrow;
> And eyes the preacher could not school,
> By wayside graves are raised;
> And hearts cry, 'God be pitiful,'
> That ne'er said — 'God be praised.'"

And as long as men grow weary and suffer they will need some one to speak to them of God. If we only had ears sensitive enough, we should hear the busy sounds of life taking the articulate cry, "We have lost the way; show us the Father and it sufficeth us."

note

Then look at the witness of *denial.* The very substitutes which men have tried to put in the place of Christianity are the imperative call of the religious nature. They are proofs of the vitality of faith.

We cannot know God, men say. On every side of us is the sensible and material through which the mind cannot penetrate in its search for truth. God may be back of it all or through all, but we cannot know. Our knowledge comes through the senses. But if we must be agnostic, we are not irreligious. We can still keep the attitude of worship. We can reverence and bow down before the mystery of the Unknown.

Again men say — faith has been swept away by science, but we have the flower and fruit of religion. The ethical attainment, the graces of character, the social ideals that we have inherited from Christianity — these are the permanent possession of the race. We still have religion, but it must be ethical. We still cherish the spirit of love and purity and trust.

And once more, we cannot have God or mystery, but we have man. He is ever growing. We have not arrived. There is in the great stream of life that which makes for the higher life. Shall we not worship

man — at least the noblest man? Hero-worship is the unconscious tribute to the divine in man. The religion of humanity is the worship of the highest human ideals.

So the very substitutes for faith prove the vitality of the soul.

Men are never happy in denial. They find no peace in it. Who can forget the anguish of many a heart at the thought "the great companion is dead." Is there anything more pathetic than the literature of denial? You are familiar with Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" — in which the infinite pathos of a faithless world has its finest and sincerest expression.

"The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits: — on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone. The cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,
Listen! — You hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought

Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
  Of human misery; we
  Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant Northern sea.

  The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
  Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
  But now I only hear
  Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
  Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
  And naked shingles of the world.

  Ah, love, let us be true
  To one another! for the world, which seems
  To lie before us like a land of dreams,
  So various, so beautiful, so new,
  Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
  Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
  And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
  Where ignorant armies clash by night."

And the social unrest tells the same story. It is proof of the vitality of the spirit of man. It is the aspiration and struggle for a better life. Professor Peabody remarks that the contests of labour are the mark of a free and civilized society, that there are no labour troubles in Turkey. That was true when he wrote, for there was no freedom then. But the week after the new constitution was promulgated there was a strike on the street cars of Constantinople.

Workmen are not insensible to the religious appeal. Too much must not be inferred from their hissing the Church yet cheering the name of Jesus, but it shows that they are not sunk below enthusiasm for an ideal — and that means much.

During the railroad riots of '79, when an infuriated mob of strikers threatened to sweep up Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, and burn the homes of the rich, General Devereux, the president of one of the roads involved, went to the shops and finally got the ear of the men to speak to them. What should he say? Finally, without premeditation, he began to tell the story of Jesus, his life of patient kindness and well-doing, his interest in every life, his understanding and sympathy, his love of the poor, and toiling, and suffering, the love that gave his very life for men.

As the simple story proceeded, the hard lines gradually faded from the faces of the men, the fierce passions cooled, and something of the peace of Christ came into their hearts; the men recognized the ties of humanity and the danger was past. I do not say that this is faith, but it is the capacity of faith, and whenever the Son of Man is presented in his divine reality, the hearts

of men will respond to it. Many adversaries, and a great and effectual door!

When Dr. Thomas Guthrie had left the beautiful parish of Arbilot on the North Sea for the new parish of St. John's, Edinburgh, cut out of the Cowgate, the poorest and most neglected part of the city, he was standing one day on George IV Bridge, the street that spans the Cowgate, looking down upon the narrow, filthy closes, filled with their noisome brood, and longing, with a heavy heart, for the green fields and kind friends he had left, when he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder and heard the deep, gruff voice of Dr. Chalmers say, as with the other hand he swept a wide gesture over the parish, "A magnificent field of operations, sir, — a magnificent field of operations!"

This is what every brave soul must say of the age in which we live. "Talk about the time for the preacher and the Church being gone! There never was a time when both were more needed. It is an anxious time, a time of great problems, a time of radical changes, a time of testing and suffering. But we may live through it all, and keep heart and courage up, and abide in our place, and do our work, and stand in

our lot to the end of the days if only we have faith and the vision and judgment which come from faith." (*British Weekly*, Sept. 14, 1911.)

A great door and effectual is opened unto us, and the very adversaries are the witness to the need of the soul and the vitality of our Gospel.

III. Who can enter the door? Who can make the largest use of opportunity? The man of *sympathy* — the man who can feel with us the difficulties of faith, who is free from all superiority and disdain and censorious spirit, the man who feels as his own loss the tragic failure of men to realize their sonship, whose heart is filled with a great compassion at the ignorance and waywardness of men, the man who loves until he gives. Every man should long to have as his own characteristic the inscription on the statue of Phillips Brooks, "the preacher of the word of God and the friend of man."

The man of *magnanimity*, — the large-mindedness in thought and feeling that shall recognize the common things of life, but not be limited by them, that shall pass over all petty barriers that the pride and selfishness of men are forever raising, and shall forever deal with truth and life in the largest way.

Large-mindedness is the opposite of that narrow selfishness that regards all persons and events and truths as they affect one's self — that provincialism of the pulpit. It is the recognition of truth and sincerity in the men who do not follow us, the power to interpret the half-truth in error and reveal the God whom men ignorantly worship, to see through the seeming confusion of moral things the order that God is working out, to lay hold of the essential, universal truths of Christianity, to refuse to deal with any petty side lights, any eccentric "isms," so that men shall feel their kinship with God and with one another.

Edward Thring, the great schoolmaster of Uppingham, defined moral greatness as the "power to move among common things with a sense of their divineness." The narrow mind is apt to be the closed mind. It may lose the power to see by refusing to lift the eyes beyond the routine of the day's work. A man may be in the heart of a great empire, just awakening to its unity and power, fairly seething with the forces of new intellectual and spiritual life, calling for leadership, — and yet be blind to all this and helpless before these unloosed ethnic powers.

There is special call for the large-minded minister in our land to-day. Only such a man can harmonize conflicting views of truth. Only such a man can lift men out of petty individualism into the coöperation of an organic life. Only such a man can understand the meaning of the peoples gathered here, what the thoughtless and worldly mind calls "the scum of the earth," and use those patient and sympathetic processes of spiritual training that shall yet develop the highest expression of Christian life.

The man of *faith*, — to whom God is the great reality and his will in Christ supreme, who feels the certainty of his word and the perfect fitness of that word to the deepest need of men, who knows the relation of the simplest duty to the final victory of the kingdom, whose eye is daily lightened by that shining goal.

The man of *courage*, whose spirit rises with danger, who is not deterred by difficulty, who is willing to face odds, who plays a man's part, who endures and hopes to the end, who believes in the eternal years of God.

To such a man the age is an open door — the difficulties and emergencies of life a divine

opportunity. The late Mr. E. R. Sill has pictured such a man in "Opportunity."

"This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream: —
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, 'Had I a sword of keener steel —
That blue blade that the King's son bears — but this
Blunt thing!' — he snapt and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the King's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh, he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day."

LECTURE III. THE VISION OF MAN

JOHN 4 : 35. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest."

LECTURE III

The Vision of Man

Men are ranked by their vision. In a very real sense the vision makes the man. It gives him his reach and his power. One man sees nothing new in the materials of life and work, and he becomes one of the world's drones, or one of the world's blind drudges. Another man sees an engine in the kettle, a new language in the clouds, an angel in the marble, a hero in the child, a people in the multitude; and he becomes an inventor, an artist, a prophet, a statesman.

One man keeps his eye on the ground. He is a realist. He takes things as they are. He believes in the actual and the practical. He rarely looks beyond his day or his spot of earth. He is a comfortable or restless mole, with no eyes beyond his little burrow. Another man lifts up his eyes. The ladder of his life does not lie flat upon the ground, but, as in Jacob's vision, it is raised to heaven, and there are angels of God ascending and descending upon it. He believes in the ideal,

the possible man, and he labors to make the ideal the actual.

No man does anything worth doing who has not first some vision of it. It is first simply an idea of his mind, a desire of his heart, a bright vision before his eyes. "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mountain," is the divine law for building character or any worthy temple of achievement. "All that God does is in prosecution of a plan, an eternal idea come to utterance." Nothing can be built without a plan — that is, an ideal. The boy who did not know what he was making by his whittling was not engaged by the master. The longer the plan, the larger the life. That is not worth doing that can be done in a brief day.

And the ideal not only directs the aim and the energy of life, but it is the great discoverer and quickener of man's nature. He is more and does more because he reaches out beyond the present and the actual.

> "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for?"

The same influence is upon preaching. The pulpit is often divided between the realists and the idealists. One preacher is

under the power of the actual, the visible, the local. He regards men as they seem. He knows all the local gossip about the men and women of his parish. He comes to dwell upon the littleness and the weakness of men. He does not believe them capable of any large life and does not expect it. He does not lift them up, call them into the realm of nobleness and magnanimity, into the larger life of the race, into the new man of spiritual progress. He does not live there himself, and how can he help men to live there?

"I am contemplating another move, since there seems to be little chance of development here. Though I have been here but eighteen months, it has been long enough to test myself in this rural field. We have fitted in all right, and everything is pleasant as regards our relation to the community, but the work does not move except in an old and deep rut. About all I can do here is to keep a garden, raise chickens, pitch hay occasionally for the neighbours, eat big dinners, and preach every Sunday when it does not rain. I do not feel that this is all there is for me to do."

Another man who went to a similar field found that there were forty-three families of

Protestant antecedents within three or four miles of the Church, who never, save in the case of funerals, set eyes within the Church. I wonder if these two men are examples of what Charles Kingsley has expressed in his lecture on "Mr. Eyes and Mr. No-eyes"?

Another preacher has spiritual eyes. He looks beneath the surface view of life, into its heart. He knows that man was made for God and is restless until he finds God. He knows that Christ was made in accordance with the power of an endless life, and therefore you cannot put any narrow, earthly limits to what man may become. This is the vision of the spiritual preacher.

It is Christ's vision of man. It has striking illustration in the passage from which I have chosen a text for the lecture. A crowd of Samaritans were coming out of Sychar, attracted by the word of the woman — "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did." They were drawn together by curiosity as any crowd of men might be anywhere in the world. We would not think them very interesting or very promising. The disciples did not think them so. They were not a pure race, — half Jew, half Canaanite; their religion was as impure as their blood; they were low down in the

social and moral scale. You could not expect any good thing from them. They were a dry and unpromising field. Christ did not think so. He saw men as they really were. He knew what was in man. And he says to the dull-eyed disciples; "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields that they are white already to harvest."

And this was always the mind of Christ. His eye was single and so it was full of light. He saw things whole and he saw things clear. He looked through all the disguises and wrappings of life, all the artificial barriers that hide and divide men, and saw the real man, the essential man, man as a living soul, a child of God.

An hour before this, he had met the woman at Jacob's well. She was ignorant, superstitious, degraded. We should be tempted to withdraw from her as from contagion. A modern congregation might feel uncomfortable if she came in to worship. What could she know of God? What could she have to do with the pure and holy Jesus? Surely, she was too low down in the scale! And yet, notice how Christ dealt with her! What courtesy, what kindness, what understanding! Well might Charles Lamb call Jesus "the first gentleman." No selfish attitude

of superiority to her, no haughty condescension, no speaking down to her! He recognized her spiritual nature, the secret need and craving of her heart. He tried to awaken it and then to satisfy it. To this ignorant, superstitious, degraded woman he spoke, as though it were hers by right as well as his, the loftiest truth He ever spoke to man, the spiritual nature of God and of all true worship of God.

And so it was with Christ always. He was a revealer of life. He spoke to the best in man and called it forth. He saw in Peter and John, the rough, untutored fishermen, the open-mindedness and loyalty and courage of great apostles. He saw in the sinful woman who washed his feet with tears of penitence and wiped them with her hair, not the outcast, but the soul, washed of its sin, capable of great love and sacrifice. He saw in Levi, the despised tax-gatherer, that poverty of spirit, that hunger after a better life, that would make him a true disciple and the writer of the first Gospel. He saw in Saul, the conscientious Pharisee, the religious zealot, the capacity for profound conviction and sustained enthusiasm and unwearied labor that made him the missionary Apostle.

The early Church had much of the idealism of Christ. It was the vision of the white harvest fields of human life that scattered the early disciples everywhere preaching the word, and in a single generation made men messengers of the Christ from the pillars of Hercules to the gates of India.

Paul, in his missionary journeyings, had come to the western limits of Asia. If the day were clear, he could look across the Ægean and see the dim outline of a new continent. He was ambitious to conquer new lands and he went to sleep with that hope in his heart, and he had a dream that changed the face of Europe, and made possible a Christian civilization beyond the sea. A man of Macedonia stood before him with that cry which has been the watchword of Christian advance ever since. "Come over and help us."

To Paul man was the greatest word next to God. He was not thinking of men as they were. Macedonia did not know of his gospel and did not care. No committee from Macedonia with urgent appeal called for the service of Paul. Then, as now, men were indifferent to their high calling, or ignorant of it. God sent the vision and not man — but it was the vision of man. It was

man as God saw him — his need and his hope that made Paul the great optimist and the master-missionary.

You have but to study the word *saints* in the Epistles to know the magnanimity of the Apostles, their faith in goodness, their vision of the possible man. Take the church at Corinth. It was formed from the most corrupt city of the world. They were imperfect in their faith and still more in their life. None of them were as good as they ought to be. Read the letters of Paul to see how factious and selfish, worldly and even sensual, many of them were. And yet Paul calls them saints; he looks through their stained and crippled lives and sees the men that are to be. He believes that Christ can make — is making — new men of them. Paul was a Christian idealist — and so an optimist. The vision of the possible man has quickened the blood of every true optimist.

Long after, Tennyson prays:

> "O, for a man to arise in me,
> That the man that I am may cease to be!"

and the Gospel is the answer that God gives to every one with this longing.

Paul's faith in men is something wonder-

ful because he knew what Christ had done for him, and he believed in the living Christ. I suppose the Roman Christians were in no sense a superior body. And yet, with what appreciation and confidence Paul writes to them! "I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Rom. 15 : 14).

It is the vision of the soul of man, its worth, its need, its redemption, that has written the best chapters of the Church, the story of loving and self-denying service in many lands, of heroic devotion to the spiritual good of the nations. And modern missions has been led by the same vision. For the first time, something of the greatness of Christ's thought has been seen. Men begin to have the mind of Christ in his view of the world. Man is thought of as mankind. The differences of race and land and tongue are superficial. The oneness of mankind is essential and vital. Christianity is a world religion, or it is only an imposture, it is for all men or it can be nothing for any man. In this vision and hope the finest men and women of our time have labored. They see the future in the instant, the white harvest fields where life is the poorest and

most forbidding. They find joy in the hardest sowing of the seed.

Take life as we shall find it, as we have found it, — men and women of common clay, absorbed in very earthly pursuits, seemingly far more interested in work and play than they are in our message; many vulgar and petty and disagreeable; many slaves of sin in gross or refined forms; many whose studies and pursuits have led them to consider the Gospel a far-away tale; who have no use for what they term the "stage properties" of the other world, who are supremely interested in the affairs of this life; some who would write themselves "lovers of their fellow-men" who seem uncertain even of the fact of God. Shall we take these people at their own estimate? Or shall we look at them with deeper eyes, the mind of Christ?

The pulpit is powerfully influenced by its own time. We are all greatly tempted to look at life through the atmosphere of common opinion. We are not above the social prejudice that separates classes and races and blinds the eye to the possible good. We have bowed down to the idols of the market-place and the forum. Take the different peoples that confront our Christianity and

make the practical race problem for our churches. The dull-eyed world says, "There is no good Indian but a dead Indian," but Dr. Riggs, who laboured for forty years among the Sioux, and whose "Mary and I" is the very idyll of beautiful life, said, "I went to my work thinking of the Indian as an Indian, but I soon came to think of him as a man." The dull-eyed world says, "The negro is a brute, fit only for the servile work of the world"; but the vision of Christ speaks through thousands of great-hearted lives: "Give the man a chance, whom your own civilization has kept a brute. The soul of the black man is as precious in the sight of God as the soul of the white."

The dull-eyed world says, "He is only a Sheeny," and the lip curls in scorn at the word. And we may regard the most vital and religious race of the world as hopeless. The race prejudice of our American Christianity is as irrational and pagan and despicable as the castes of India.

The dull-eyed world speaks of the Chinaman as a "yellow peril." "He never can become a true Christian." But the vision of Christ speaking through that noble statesman, Mr. John Hay, and the most prophetic men of the church says: "The Chinaman has

intellectual and spiritual capacity of the highest order. We shall yet see in the East the highest development of Christianity." The dull-eyed world says: "He is only a Dago. He may do our dirty work, he may dig our sewers and pave our streets, but he never can become one of us. He is a menace to our society by his low standards of living." But the mind of Christ says: "He is the countryman of Dante and Petrarch, of Raphael and Angelo, of Verdi and Salvini, of Cavour and Mazzini and Garibaldi. He still has the soul of music and art, of liberty and religion. It is our work to touch that soul and make it live again."

One of our young poets, Robert Haven Schauffler, the grandson of the famous missionary of Constantinople, and son of the missionary to the Bohemians, has taught our eyes to see aright the polyglot peoples that have flocked to our shores:

"Countrymen, bend and invoke
Mercy for us blasphemers,
For that we spat on these marvellous folk,
Nations of darers and dreamers,
Scions of singers and seers,
Our peers and more than our peers.
'Rabble and refuse,' we name them
And 'scum of the earth' to shame them.
Mercy for us of the few, young years,

Of the culture so callow and crude,
Of the hands so grasping and rude,
The lips so ready for sneers
At the sons of our ancient more-than-peers.
Mercy for us who dare despise
Men in whose loins our Homer lies;
Mothers of men who shall bring to us
The glory of Titian, the grandeur of Huss;
Children, in whose frail arms shall rest
Prophets and singers and saints of the West.

"Newcomers all from the Eastern seas,
Help us incarnate dreams like these.
Forget, and forgive, that we did you wrong.
Help us to father a nation, strong
In the comradeship of an equal birth,
In the wealth of the richest bloods of earth."

How many a country parish, that may seem common and unattractive, is full of interesting and promising life, if we only had the eyes to see it. I have passed the summer in a small hill town of Massachusetts where for a hundred years Marget Howe and William McClure, and Domsie and Drumsleigh and many more like them could be found. I am sure that the narrow little hamlet of Drumtochty never had finer characters than many a country community of New England. Only you must have the big heart and vivid imagination of an Ian Maclaren to bring them out.

The true story of Dr. Watson's ministry is found in his Scottish sketches. He never forgot the people of the glen, or the great lesson of his earlier ministry — that noble lives were often found in hard conditions and behind rough faces. How beautiful his answer to the Highland parish on the 25th anniversary of his ordination!

"Nothing could be more encouraging to a minister than to know that after the lapse of a quarter of a century his ordination day is still remembered in the glen where he began his work. From a great city and from very different scenes my thoughts turn with fondness to the slope of the Grampians and the parish which was then so much secluded from the outer world, and where on that account the hearts were so true and deep. When wearied by the din of the city and hard-driven by its many demands, I often wish that I were again in the Manse garden, or by the side of the Almond, or on the hill below the quarry where the wind is blowing free and clear, or in the little Kirk with the familiar faces of the past, old and young, looking at me. . . . Oh, the days that have been, and shall be no more, but love remaineth."

Take the rude, wild life of our frontiers,

where the elemental passions of men seem to rage at times in their wildest fury. "The frontiers of civilization," said Henry Ward Beecher, "are the fringes of hell." But a Sky Pilot sees behind these rough faces and hard conditions the capacity for pure feeling and heroic devotion, and in that vision he preaches the Christ without whom none of us can live the life of men.

Or take the more hopeless and sodden mass of some great city. Mr. Huxley was of the opinion that the savages of Patagonia were in a better state than many in London's East End. You can go in ten minutes from your stately churches to where sin has stripped off all the garments of beauty and appears in her hideous and repulsive deformity. People are crowded together in unwholesome conditions where a decent family life seems impossible. "Worse housed than our hacks and our pointers." They cannot earn the wages of a decent living. They labour sore and die without thought and without hope. Is it an unpleasant sight? Do men turn away from the hopeless problem? "I always shut my eyes," said a society woman, "when I have to go down Third Avenue Elevated."

There are men and women — like Jacob

Riis and Miss Jane Addams and Dr. Graham Taylor — and a growing number of them, who look through the eyes of Christ with his divine pity for the multitudes and his hope also. There are men who have the faith that

"Beneath the veriest ash, there hides a spark of soul,
Which quickened by love's breath may yet pervade the whole
O' the gray."

This faith in the spiritual capacity of men is necessary for the most effective preaching to them. The most fatal unbelief is not criticism of certain views of the Bible or denial of the authority of venerable creeds, but loss of faith in the power of the Gospel to make a new life, and loss of faith in the capacity of men to respond to that life. You cannot help a man unless you have faith in his power to become a good man. This surely is one element in the divine forgiveness. God says to us that confidence is now restored and we can become worthy of his love. A Christian optimism is essential to all leadership. "Why do you judge life by its worst phases and faith by its low-water mark of depression?" said the late David Swing to one of our young ministers in

Chicago. "If I lose faith in men one hour in twenty-four, in the twenty-three hours of faith I will do my work for humanity."

What are the helps for the preacher towards this spiritual vision of man?

To bring our lives daily and rigorously under the mind of Christ, to seek more earnestly than we can express to have his view of life and work. We must carry the atmosphere of prayer and fellowship with us, or our vision will certainly be coloured by the atmosphere of the world. If we do not make Christ supreme, we shall bow before the idols of the market and the forum.

It is a help to cultivate the spiritual imagination, that interpretative power of life, to fill the mind with fair visions, to grow in magnanimity, to dwell in thought constantly upon the true and beautiful and good. A prosy, lifeless minister is apt to be a blind minister, and one is the cause of the other. Not to dwell on the ideal side — ever to remember that God has sent us and that God will help us — is to be false spies and cowardly leaders, who have no place in the promised land. And whatever will purify the vision and give us the divine impulses that attend it will help the preacher to interpret truth and life in the light of the largest

hope. That is why ministers, of all men, should cultivate the imagination. That is why Lord Bacon urged the study of poetry — as the training of the eye to see and the heart to feel more than the common man. "Poesy was ever thought to have some participation of divineness because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shews of things to the desires of the mind."

It is also a help to have large interests, to get out of the local and provincial, and, in our studies and sympathies, get into the deep currents of the race. We not only need to write individuals on our hearts, but also humanity, to connect each one with the larger idea. That each one, however weak, is a part of that race that shall move on to the perfected kingdom of God.

A young minister expressed his joy in an exchange of pulpits with a neighbouring minister. It helped him to forget the pettiness and littleness of a too close and narrow view of men and rise to that truer, ideal view of a congregation, that "impression of preaching to humanity, and so to keep the truth that he preaches as large as it ought to be." Phillips Brooks calls looking across the face of a congregation like looking the race in the future. "All the nobleness and responsibility of his vocation comes to him."

And there is no help for the spiritual vision like the determined purpose to seek men. We lose faith in men because we don't love them enough. We don't yearn for their salvation. How startled many preachers would be when they come down from their finished pulpits to hear some man utter the cry of the Philippian jailor! Every faithful effort to win men will lay bare their spiritual nature and worth. Faithless, visionless preaching comes from moral indifference. The preacher whose heart is stirred, who is intent on the salvation of men, has a vision of what the soul is worth. "It is by working for the soul that we best learn what the soul is worth. If ever in your ministry the souls of those committed to your care grow dull before you, and you doubt whether they have any such value that you should give your life for them, go out and work for them, and as you work their value shall grow clear to you. Go and try to save a soul and you will see how well it is worth saving, how capable it is of the most complete salvation. Not by pondering upon it, nor by talking of it, but by serving it, you learn its preciousness." (Brooks.)

LECTURE IV. THE SECRET OF THE HEART

JOHN 4:10. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink."

LECTURE IV

The Secret of the Heart

1. There are preachers who stand out as great interpreters of truth, and there are others who are felt to be great interpreters of life. Liddon and Alexander Maclaren are of the first class; Robertson and Spurgeon, Beecher and Brooks, of the second. Canon Liddon was a critical student of the Scriptures. For twenty-five years he had the chair of New Testament Exegesis at Oxford. At the same time he was a master of philosophical thinking, especially as it touches the forms of Gospel truth. And he made all this experience and culture vocal in his preaching. He was intent on clear thinking, he took his hearers through processes of scripture induction. With his wealth of critical and philosophical knowledge he unfolded the truths of Scripture over against what he held to be the erroneous thinking of the day. The supreme work of Alexander Maclaren was to master and teach the Scriptures. He was a lifelong student of the Bible. No

modern preacher has so honoured its pages. Almost no modern sermons are so scriptural in care for the exact truth of the writer, in the use of the Scripture for both illustration and argument, and in bringing the very atmosphere of the Gospel into the pulpit. He had such faith in the divineness of the message that he was intent only on interpreting the Scripture, certain that it would prove its own fitness to the human heart.

He was the spiritual teacher, tracing in the Scriptures and in the experiences of the disciple the truths of the "new man." It would be difficult to find in modern sermons more systematic teaching of the sources of life, the beginning, the steps of growth, the duties and traits of the spiritual man. And, as corresponding to these, as their source and divine means, the careful and systematic unfolding of the truths of the Gospel. "Faith saves by getting a living hold of the Christ who saves. The object of faith is not a creed, but a person. The work of the creeds is simply to make him known. The Christ is not simply example and teacher, but the crucified and risen Lord, the atoning Saviour, and the glorified head of a redeemed race." Alexander Maclaren combined the interpretation of the word of

God and the analysis of human experience in that life. So he attained to something like a science of the spiritual life, a practical philosophy of the Gospel.

F. W. Robertson knew his Bible, but he knew man and his own heart still better. He had a subtle power of penetrating to the very heart of the human secret. Like the finest literature, his sermons deal with the drama of the inner life. Spurgeon also knew what was in man. He did not come to it like Robertson through his imagination, but by his sturdy common sense, his genial sympathy, and his large experience of the average man.

Beecher was a student of literature and life, all that would help him to sympathy with men and the understanding of their natures. Like a great harp, his heart vibrates to every human touch. He always deals with the elemental passions and aims to speak so as to touch the motives of action.

Phillips Brooks was prophetic in his effort to teach the essentialness of Gospel truth, and still more in his subtle understanding of the human heart. His sermons, like Tennyson's poems, search the age-consciousness to its lowest depth. The heart is laid bare with startling truthfulness, its secret

motives and loves, the complex working out in action and character.

2. The Bible is the book of life. Its truth is always through life and for life. In its historic revelation, it gives the deepest experiences of the race in religion. The arc is long enough to know the meaning of action. Real men and women live in its pages. We trace the origin and growth and fruit of good and evil. All the play of motive is here. It is a mirror in which we see ourselves. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the Word of God as "living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." And the teacher who really interprets the Bible, who regards it as something more real than a treasury of proof-texts for his doctrine, will hold this mirror up to Nature. No man can be a true interpreter of Scripture without revealing the heart of man.

3. But there is a definite and specific use of the Scriptures for unveiling the inner life and there are preachers who are essentially interpreters and revealers.

4. It is evident, I think, that this inter-

pretation of life is a large office of the pulpit. We must get beneath the surface of life, behind the conventions of society, back of the maxims and standards of popular thought. We must understand and reveal man the individual, and man as a part of humanity.

Men are not what they seem. There is a nobler and baser man too. The forces of convention and of habit, of association and of opinion, hide the real heart. The worst of it is that they are able to hide the heart from itself. Men so live in self-comparison, in the estimate of others, in the sunshine of popular favor and worldly success that they live in the surface of their lives. They may live thirty, fifty, seventy years without looking deep enough to know what sort of men they really are. Life can never be real. There can never be any spiritual growth without a deep revealing.

There are secret longings half felt and never voiced. There are men and women who seem untouched by the ministry of the Church, indifferent to her voice, the soul dead in them or never born, who are restless and dissatisfied — the soul of man shown even in its ruins, to use the thought of Bushnell.

"Here, within the soul's gloomy chamber, the loosened passions rage and chafe, im-

patient of their law; here huddle on the wild and desultory thoughts; here the imagination crowds in shapes of glory and disgust, tokens both and mockeries of its own creative power, no longer in the keeping of reason; here sits remorse, scowling and biting her chain; here creep out the fears, a meagre and pale multitude; here drives on the will in his chariot of war; here lie trampled the great aspirations, groaning in immortal thirst; . . . and yet, despite all this, a fact which overtops and crowns all other evidence, you are trying and contriving still to be happy, a happy ruin! Oh this great and mighty soul, were it something else you might find what to do with it; — charm it with the jingles of a golden toy, house it in a safe with ledgers and stocks, take it about on journeys to see and to be seen. Anything would please it and bring it content. But it is the godlike soul, capable of rest in nothing but God, able to be filled and satisfied with nothing but his fulness and the confidence of his friendship."

And Browning has voiced the spirit-life of man in his baseness — (Christina):

> "Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
> But not quite so sunk that moments
> Sure though seldom are denied us,

When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones,
And apprising it if pursuing
Or the right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing.

* * * * *

"There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled up honours perish,
Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
While just this or that poor impulse
Which for once had play unstifled
Seems the sole work of a lifetime
That away the rest have trifled."

To make men conscious of the secret processes of their lives, to fathom for them the depths of their unbelief and godlessness, to make them see and feel the power of sinful desire in their hearts that pulls them down and turns the fairest promise into earthliness, as the earthworm pulls in the leaf, this is the first work of the Spirit, and the first work of the preacher through the agency of the Spirit. "And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16 : 8).

There is no better example of this revealing the secrets of the heart than in the chapter by J. G. Holland on "the Vices of The Imag-

ination" in "Gold Foil." "We often wonder that certain men and women are left by God to the commission of sins which shock us. We wonder how, under the temptations of a single hour, they fell from the very heights of virtue and honor into sin and shame. The fact is there are no such falls as these, or there are next to none. These men and women are those who have dallied with temptation, who have exposed themselves to the influence of it, and have been weakened and corrupted by it. If we should get at the secret histories of those who stand suddenly discovered as vicious, we should find that, underneath a blameless outward life, they have welcomed and entertained sin in their imaginations, until their moral sense was blunted, and they were ready for the deed of which they thought they were incapable. . . . This world of sense built by the imagination — how fair and foul it is! Like a fairy island in the sea of life, it smiles in sunlight and sleeps in green, known of the world not by communion of knowledge, but by personal secret discovery! The waves of every ocean kiss its feet. The airs of every clime play among its trees, and tire with the voluptuous music which they bear. Flowers bend idly to the fall of fountains, and beautiful

forms are wreathing their white arms and calling for companionship. Out toward this charmed island by day and by night a million shallops push unseen of each other, and of the world of real life left behind, for revelry and reward! The single sailors never meet each other: they tread the same paths unknown of each other: they come back and no one knows and no one asks where they have been. There is vice enough in the world of actual life, and it is there that we look for it, but there is more in that other world of the imagination that we do not see — vice that poisons, vice that kills, vice that makes whited sepulchres of temples that are deemed pure, even by multitudes of their tenants."

The history of preaching is rich in examples of this power to look into the heart and lay bare its secret life. In this, also, Christ was our supreme example. He was the great interpreter of life. He knew what was in men. The good came to his light, and the evil fled from him into deeper darkness. He recognized the secret unrest and craving of the woman at the well. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee

living water." In sharp, stinging rebuke he touched the proud, exclusive, hard, selfish spirit of Simon. With unerring touch he found the weak spot in the life of the rich young ruler, the secret unconscious love making a god of money within the temple of respectable obedience. In words of tender compassion and hope he answered the love of the broken-hearted woman who washed his feet with her tears.

Paul had this power of showing a man to himself. He was brought bound before the splendid court of Felix and given liberty to speak his message. And he so reasoned of self-control, righteousness, and the certainty of judgment that Felix was before Paul, trembling at the picture of himself. This was the power of Jonathan Edwards, the reading of his own heart, and through imagination looking into the hearts of others. His view of truth led him to see the darkest lines of character and so to draw them that men were afraid of their sin and trembled at its judgment. Mr. Spurgeon was often interviewed after his sermons by men in deep conviction, and sometimes by men in the spirit of resentment that he had discovered in their lives the secret sin or desire they supposed known only to themselves. It

was simply his native insight, quickened and purified by the spirit of God.

It was said of Dr. John A. Broadus, the noble preacher of the South and the author of "The Preparation and Delivery of the Sermon," that "He interpreted people to themselves. He enabled them to know what they did know, and to feel what they had long felt. He explained to them their own experiences. He laid hold upon things in their hearts which had long lain there dormant, and told them what they meant. He told them all things that they ever did. He said things that were so homely and true that they thought they had known them all their lives. This he did to such an extent that the people sometimes suspected that he had stolen their thoughts." ("Life of Broadus.")

How can the preacher gain this power of knowing and interpreting the secret of the heart?

1. By the deep knowledge of self. There has been a morbid self-examination in the past, often a minute and fearful examination of the states of the soul, an unreal condemnation of life, almost a nursing of the invalid soul, a secret pride and joy in the confessions of miserable sinners. The devotions of the Church have been far too introspective

and subjective. Our hymnology has often sinned against a wholesome view of nature and of man. The conception of saint has sometimes been narrow and ascetic. It has repelled men with red blood in their veins to whom life is good. The morbid view of self has shut men up to littleness and weakness. They have felt helpless before the mysteries of their own lives, paralyzed before the forces of evil. They have not been rightly conscious of spiritual power.

There is a far more wholesome spirit to-day in the outward look. The larger interest in life, in nature and man, the missionary spirit, the social conscience, the enterprise of the world, all tend to interpret and emphasize the teachings of the Gospel that look to other lives, to the service of men. The strongest appeal of Christianity to-day is to the desire to serve, to make life count for the largest good. To tell young men that Christ speaks peace to troubled conscience may not win, but in his name to give the call of Labrador or China arrests attention and calls forth the deepest loyalty. Faith matches the truest psychology, that we know and grow in the religious life by doing. Faith is the question of obedience.

And yet, we may easily err on the side of

the active life. The pendulum to-day swings to the other extreme. We may be much without in visiting and committees, in organizations and addresses, and little within in that searching of the spirit that reveals the deep things of life. It is often remarked that the preaching to-day deals too lightly with sin and consequently there is a slight conviction of ill-desert, almost no heart-agonies, an easy entrance upon the Christian profession, and a slight grasp of its significance.

We would not go back to the prolonged disquiet of a Bunyan, a Finney, or even a Beecher. We could not and be true to the life of our age and our conception of the Christian faith. But the Gospel is radical in its demands, and cleansing in its life; and we shall not rightly interpret it and be able to adapt it to the human heart without that self-knowledge that comes from an honest look within and the convincing light of the Spirit of God. We must know ourselves. We must take time to salute our souls and learn what sort of men we are. Every minister needs daily an honest, searching look at life in the quiet of meditation and in the pure air of prayer. We must step aside from the rush of human effort and the confusion of earthly opinions and standards,

try to extricate ourselves from the things we are doing, and put the mind of Christ upon our life.

"Take heed to thyself" was the earnest charge of a great Apostle to a young minister as dear to him as his own son. "Preach to your own faults, and you will speak to the conscience of men," is the word of a noted modern teacher. All vital teaching is personal. It comes from self-knowledge and experience of the truth. And this deep self-knowledge will be the key to unlock other lives.

2. The secret of the heart cannot be gained without sympathy with men, feeling the "call of the folk," and genuine interest in individual men. Self-examination alone may lead to eccentric and morbid views of the truth. Men have meditated upon truth until it seemed to stand before their eyes a splendid reality, they have elaborated their systems with matchless logic, but they have been as unreal as a fabric of the air because they did not take account of man and interpret truth in terms of human sympathy. Edwards' doctrine of man was of this nature — man developing the seeds of evil, without any element of good, in God's world yet untouched by God. Such a man is a pure

abstraction. He is the creation of a merciless logic. He never lived. Every human life is a complex of good and evil and "Christ is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

John Henry Newman, trained in the extreme Calvinism of the Puritan theology, got his first rude awakening when preaching in Saint Mary's, Oxford. He found that his scheme of truth did not fit men, that, by actual life, his people could not be divided between saints and sinners. "Always it is the higher life, pressed, watched, hunted by the lower; always it is Judah with Edom at its gates."

Men purely of the library or of a class, of the scholastic or exclusive spirit, rarely interpret the heart and speak a living word to it. You have heard sermons that might just as well have been preached in another world. They had little humanity in them, and so they were not the gospel for men. "The sermon should have God for its father, and earth for its mother," says a quaint old writer.

Fellow-feeling not only helps us to read the heart, but it is the magic key that unlocks the heart. Such a man inevitably becomes a father-confessor to his people. That is what Charles Kingsley was at

Eversley and to a world-parish. From all parts of the English-speaking world came letters, laying bare the heart and asking directions for the life. Men who had read his "Sermons for the Times," his novels, his lectures, felt that here was a preacher who really lived with men, felt with men and understood men. "I should be ashamed to write at such length to any ordinary man," says a newspaper man, "but you understand things." And Mrs. Kingsley testifies that when his sermons were the most pathetic and moving, it was always because he was trying to minister to some special case of need, which he alone knew.

I remember a boyhood friend who had this divine gift of sympathy. Many a time on the way to school I have seen him stop and talk with some man working on the street, and in a perfectly simple and natural way would soon have him talking about himself and telling the story of his life. And it is sympathy that has given him the secrets of many hearts and made him the minister of life to so many men.

3. It must be the large sympathy that puts the man first, that understands in order to help, and the farthest removed from that curious interest that noses among other

people's affairs, and loves nothing so much as talking about them. There is human interest and there is idle gossip. The one is the bond of a fair society, the other is the acid that eats out the strongest structure. A gossip in the pulpit, the easy rehearsal of personal experience, the sensational flavouring of the sermon with anecdotes and incidents, many of them too peculiar or too sacred for public utterance, is not proclaiming the nobleness of truth or searching the hearts of men.

The sermon is the most personal when the personal elements are the most thoroughly suffused in the truth; it is the most convincing and cleansing when the person is the most self-unconscious in the message. As to all the secrets of life, the preacher should have the honour of the doctor; he should have the sensitiveness and discretion to make such knowledge sacred. A careless speech here will shut the door of the heart and make the truth worse than futile.

4. The secret of the heart is gained in a large sense by the increasing knowledge of human life. He may not know men best who is simply intimate with his few associates. No man can be fully understood by the local and provincial light. It is less

true every year that men stand alone. The solidarity of man is the marked characteristic of our time and it will be increasingly so until mankind are really one. We are getting a world-view of life and the smallest hamlet is affected by world-thought and movements. Theories whose very names are unknown will at last percolate to the very bottom of the social structure. The preacher should be large-minded, have large interests, who would do most for the individual. Not only does such a preacher bring the tonic of a higher world and is able to see facts in their proportion, but he is able to interpret each life in the light of its broader relations. We are not only to study single lives but the facts and forces of the life of the age, the great movements of thought and action that form the ideas and shape the lives of men.

5. There have been gifted men and women whose divine work has been to show man to himself, to lay bare the secret motives and impulses of human life, to trace the course of a soul in the world of probation, to give the laws of character in terms of life. They are the world's poets and seers. The literature of a people is the best index of its life, and its clearest mirror. Matthew Arnold

has spiritual insight when he defines literature as the "interpretation of life." Tennyson rightly calls the poet the seer.

"He saw through life and death, through good and ill,
He saw through his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,
Before him lay. —"

A great poet searches the consciousness of the age to its lowest depth. He reveals depths that we had never sounded, he bodies forth the dim and misty strivings that come to all men. A great drama like "Macbeth" or "Lear" or many a modern play weaves before us the very stuff of our life, brings into visible action the subconscious life which so powerfully directs our course. Many a life for the first time catches a glimpse of its kinship with a race sinning and suffering, and instinctively exclaims with the Doctor in the sleep-walking scene of "Macbeth," before the sudden disclosure of guilt — "God, God forgive us all." A soul kindly, thoughtless, loving the color and stir of life, might pause with startled warning before Mrs. Wharton's "House of Mirth," at the merciless sincerity of the portrayal, the inevitable descent of the lovers of pleasure.

The preacher who would know the secrets of the heart must study such books. They will keep the imagination alive, which is the power to see what is hidden to the common mind. They will connect with the springs of pure feeling. They will strengthen those universal sympathies which shall help us to have the Master's compassion upon the multitudes. The well-known preacher was not wrong, who connected a sermon on prayer, that interpreted the universal instincts of the heart, and made prayer seem natural and necessary, with a winter's special study of the dramas of Shakespeare.

The realism of the heart needs to be matched by the realism of the sermon if our preaching is to be convincing and cleansing. Language cannot wholly reveal, the best speech is but approximate, but we need to be convinced of the dignity and worth of speech so that we shall regard the sensational as untrue, the showy and vainly rhetorical as unworthy an earnest man. "Give me the plain, nervous style," said John Wesley. "I am for plain, sound English." This realism of speech was one secret of his power. Calm, simple, direct, intense, such preaching had not been heard in England for a century. We shall avoid all abstrac-

tion, all vagueness and unreality, and aim at the vivid and genuine and sympathetic expression of truth and life as we know them. We shall strive for the simplicity that always marks reality, the unveiled truth.

Need I say that the whole process of such preaching is connected with the moral life of the preacher? To give truth its voice, we must see clearly and feel strongly. That is spiritually connected with the whole moral nature. Freedom from the professional and class spirit, regard for man as man, stripped of the accidents of place and work, the singleness to this ideal in the Gospel of the Son of Man, are the moral conditions for spiritual vision, for knowing and interpreting the secret of the heart.

LECTURE V. THE HUMAN TOUCH

MATTHEW 8 : 3. "And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him."

LECTURE V

The Human Touch

It is significant that in nearly every act of healing Christ conveyed his power through personal touch. The touch was the necessary point of contact. It expressed his feeling with men, his oneness with them, and established the relation of sympathy by which his power could be felt.

1. The touch is the illustration of the transcendent act by which the Son of Man became flesh. It is the symbol of his perfect identification with the nature and needs of our human life. The very same word is used in the Epistle to the Hebrews to describe the Incarnation: "For verily, not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham."

2. The personal touch is the law of the Incarnation. It is the universal law of help. What Christ did, we must do, if we are to help men in his name. The truth is to be propagated, the new life given by personal contact. "Faith saves by getting a living

hold of the Christ who saves." No man was ever saved except by bringing him into personal relation with the Christ. Not creeds, forms, activities, — save as Christ lives in them and through them, — touch the lives of men. "And ye shall be endued with power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses for me at Jerusalem and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the Earth." The power is the spirit of God in the lives of men, and the method is the personal touch of vitalized lives.

3. In this matter of touch, Christianity is no exception. It does not violate our nature. It is in the completest accord with the laws of life. It simply uses and sanctifies the laws of human nature. It is the universal law of help. Men must be helped just where they are. We cannot form our beautiful ideals, and knock out all the rounds of the ladder, and say, "Go up there and be saved." The unknown must be taught in the terms of the known. Enlarged knowledge and life must grow from present experience. That's the way the child learns and man never outgrows the law. If we are to convince men we must begin with admitted truth. We must stand where they

are and show the way. The appeal must be to experience, and it can never get beyond this tried guide. The power of illustration is the new flash on common knowledge; it lights up familiar truth or translates the unknown. In teaching to-day, much is rightly made of the point of contact. It is the getting hold of the child, forming some bond of interest and sympathy. Nothing can be done without it.

The study of lives is ever more important than the study of books. How useless the teacher who does not remember his own boyhood, and how matchless the influence of him who keeps the youthful spirit, who is just a big boy! And he who would minister in Christ's name cannot get too close to others. There must be no isolation, or superiority, no exclusiveness, or condescension, but a genuine brotherhood, a true Messianic entrance into the sins and burdens, the struggles and hopes of men. We must not despise the lower feelings of men if we would elevate them. It is very easy to pitch the key too high for men to follow.

A man said of his pastor, "he presents the truth so that I should like to follow it, and he makes me feel that I can follow it." Charles Kingsley used to say that he found

men by their leading ideas, and then tried, often insensibly, to bring them to his leading ideas, the redemption through Christ.

We must not shrink from the unlovely and degraded. Natural love must be controlled by a higher love. Instinct, taste, appreciation, reward must all be governed by the love of Christ. Christ put forth his hand and touched the leper, and our hand of sympathy and helpfulness must be upon the sorest need of man.

It is easy to let the conventional spirit in form and method interfere with the reaching of men. Tradition and habit may fail to meet the changing conditions of life. It is said of the men of the Church, "There is a progressive spirit among our men that insists on getting things done for the saving of men, even though old and honoured methods must be laid aside. There is a willingness to study the use of things fitted to the day's needs that is vitalizing hundreds of churches, and making religion real to many men who have hitherto held it as a matter of creedal belief. The dignified and historic in our church life can the better be conserved, if we will use it to sanctify ingenious and efficient means of saving men, even though they may possibly be entirely unconventional."

Here, if anywhere, is the weakness of our voluntary Christianity. We have followed too much the natural law of the world. All that helps men in a material sense, better sanitation, better wages, better food, better homes, tends to separate them from the less worthy, or the less fortunate. The despair of our Christian civilization are the Belgravias and White Chapels, the Fifth Avenues and Mott Streets, the walls of moral and social separation. Against these walls the common efforts of the churches seem as helpless as waves against a rocky shore. Christian brotherhood alone will break these walls down. The heathenism of our great cities, and the heathenism of foreign lands will never yield, save by the personal touch.

"Is charity the giving of worn-out garments?" asks an earnest thinker. "Is it a ten-dollar bill, given to a paid visitor or secretary of some benevolent organization in the Church? Shall the man never go and give the gift himself? Shall the woman never deny herself her reception or party or musicale, and go and actually touch, herself, the foul, sinful sore of diseased humanity, as it festers in the great Metropolis? Shall charity be conventionally and easily done through some organization? Is it possible

to organize the affections so that love shall work disagreeable things by proxy?" In vain will be our philanthropy, education, religion, unless it comes warm through the touch of a brother man.

Let me say again that our very Gospel has come in this way. Christ did not think his heavenly superiority something to be grasped and held for himself, but he emptied himself, became a man, subject to all the limitations of our earthly life. The redemptive power of God must come through a human life.

And every noble servant of Christ is an example of this law. How Paul embodied it! See him working on the coarse goats' hair tents, perhaps with rough, godless men, that he might get closer to the lives of others and not be a burden to the young churches! He loved men so that he gave himself to them. "We were well pleased to impart unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls."

There is a special demand for the personal touch now. The old individualism is passing and giving place to a sense of humanity. And Christianity must incorporate itself in the entire life of man. A hopeful expression of this spirit is the Social Settlement, where

the best men and women live where they are the most needed, and carry the spirit of Christ into the mass of pinched and crippled and hopeless life. How can salt save, unless it touches the thing to be salted!

Of all the men of our times, the foreign missionary most needs and I think best exemplifies the personal touch of Christ. Every true missionary is a social settlement. He seeks to establish close, friendly relations with the community. About him are the seemingly impenetrable walls of strange language, customs, religion. He is not wanted. He is looked upon with suspicion, and perhaps with hatred. He is called a foreign devil. His purpose is not understood, and ugly stories are told about him, and terrible prejudices raised against him. He may preach the Gospel until every man has heard, but that is not fulfilling Christ's command "to make disciples of all nations." Ears have they, but they hear not. Here is the wall of ignorance, misconception, and hatred! Little by little it is broken down, by simply living in the closest and most loving way, identified with their life, here a little, and there a little, a kind word and a helpful act, the patient endurance of suffering, the unselfish ministry of love, until the

real life is known, the personal touch is made, and the power of Christ is felt to heal.

I have tried to draw this truth of the *human touch* on a large scale, showing its relation to all life, that we may feel how universal and invariable the principle is. Preaching is just as much subject to it as any other action that tries to affect men. In fact, preaching is the most subtle and effective example of it.

The human touch understands that which is most urgent in the life of men, the thought and speech that reach the age, and the use of these. Lincoln had the human touch, when he felt the life of the nation and viewed it with such matchless simplicity in his Gettysburg address. The late Dr. John A. Broadus had the human touch, when he ignored the diffuse and inflated speech with which religious sentiment was expressed by the popular preachers of his time and used the simple realism of daily speech for the vital truths of religion.

Some men preach and their word meets the barrier of alien hearts. Men do not find themselves in it, or anything they should desire. The word of others recognizes the kinship of human lives, and it finds the heart and wins the response of faith and obedience.

The late Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) has finely expressed the human touch in the sermon by the word *humanness*. In the lecture on the technique of a sermon, he states the fourth canon as *humanity*. "One has heard able and pious sermons which might as well have been preached in Mars, for any relation they had to our life and environment. They suggested the address a disembodied spirit might give to his brethren in the intermediate state, where it is alleged we shall exist without physical correspondence. While the preacher should be very sparing with I, it ought to be possible for an expert to compose a biography of him from a year's sermons.

"The minister ought to be soaked in life; not that his sermons may never escape from local details, but rather that, being in contact with the life nearest him, he may state his Gospel in terms of human experience. No doctrine of the Christian faith is worth preserving which cannot be verified in daily life, and no doctrine will need to be defended when stated in human terms — above all, in the language of home. It was Jesus' felicitous manner to remove his Evangel from the sphere of abstract discussion, and to assert its reasonableness in the sphere of

life. 'What man among you?' was his favourite plea. God does exactly what a man does or wants to do when he is at his best. The divinity of a sermon is in proportion to its humanity." ("Cure of Souls," p. 55.)

Why do certain preachers lack the human touch?

1. From an *undue intellectual interest.* They are men of the library, devoted to intellectual pursuits and tastes. They love books more than they do men. They become members of the most exclusive set, the set of the intellectually cultured, and there is narrowness and limitation in any intellectual caste. "An exclusive, undemocratic spirit is a sorry defect in any musician!" All the great poets are universal in their sympathies. This gives them their prophetic element. And the man who preaches the largest truth must have something of this universal touch.

It must be confessed, there is something splendid in Mrs. Stowe's picture of the Puritan minister, in "A Minister's Wooing," moulding his system of thought, and living it out with rapt enthusiasm. But we must also feel that the warm, human blood does not flow in it. Such intellectual exclusive-

ness not only takes a man away from the mass of his fellows, so that he is unable to understand their life, but it makes his message an unreal thing to them. Live awhile in the University atmosphere, and then walk the streets, and enter the shops and stores, and you will feel the "worlds apart" in these lives.

A minister must be a man of two worlds. And there is a subtle temptation to feel that if the people do not understand him and respond to his tastes, it must be their fault, and not his. "I am throwing my life away on this shoe town," such a minister once wrote to Austin Phelps, of course asking his help in getting a more cultivated field. And Dr. Phelps tried to show him that the peculiar power of the Gospel and its highest glory was in doing just such kind of work. If it could not save a shoe town, it was worth nothing.

"A preacher had better work in the dark, with nothing but mother-wit, a quickened conscience, and a Saxon Bible to teach him what to do and how to do it, than to vault into an aërial ministry, in which only the upper classes shall know or care anything about him. You had better go and talk the Gospel in the Cornish dialect to the miners

who told the witnesses, summoned by the committee of the English parliament that they had 'never heard of Mister Jesus in these mines,' than to do the work of the Bishop of London. Make your ministry reach the people; in the forms of purest culture, if you can, but reach the people; with elaborate doctrine if possible, but reach the people; with classic speech, if it may be, but reach the people. The great problem of life to a cultivated ministry is to make their culture a power, instead of a luxury. Our temptations are all one way; our mission is all the other." (Austin Phelps, "Theory of Preaching," p. 583.)

2. Preachers lack the human touch through the *dogmatic spirit.* This comes also from the preponderance of intellectual interest. Clear thinking, correct belief, are made the chief thing. The Gospel is put into formulas of belief and the important work is to bring the human mind to assent to these propositions. Such a preacher is out of sympathy with men who differ from him. Correct views are important, but far more important is the attitude of the inner life, desire, and will toward the life demanded. Where there is no tolerance, the feeling that truth is infinitely more than our view of it, and that

all difference of opinion may be harmonized in the love of God, there can be little sympathy, and so little human touch.

3. There may be a *sort of idealism* far beyond the reach of men, too good for human nature's daily food. Certain men have a type of other-worldliness, a pietistic spirit that does not take note of common things, that does not bring heavenly wisdom down to dwell among men. I know a devoted minister who told me that he had given up all general reading and studied only his Bible. He bears the mark of isolation on his face; there is a gulf ever growing between his thought and the people's. It is an example of the contest which has frequently taken place in the history of Christianity between *humanism* and *pietism*. Humanism, the love of beauty in the world, in Art, and Literature, the love of life in all its forms and activities, — this must be harmonized with piety, the love and service of God. All heavenly truths and inspirations must be brought to common men to make all life more interesting and to dignify and glorify their part in it.

There is an other-worldliness that can never appeal to men — Christ did not take hold of angels, but of men. It comes from

a partial view of the Gospel as a scheme imposed upon us, rather than a life born in us, as essential and human and livable as the life of the race.

How shall we have and express the human touch in our preaching?

1. Be determined to know what men think and feel, by daily rubbing up against men, and by the study of those works in which the life of the age is revealed. The late Dr. Edward Everett Hale gave as one of the principles of his own life the effort to come in contact daily with all sorts of men. The cultivation of friendship is the training of heart and speech for the sympathetic ministry to real conditions. It was said of Dr. John Watson as a student at Edinburgh University: "No matter where you put him down, he will be at home with the man at his elbow."

Dr. Faunce, speaking of the "Education of the Minister by his Task," says: "After spending years in the study of literature and theology, it is a startling and wholesome experience to be flung out into a parish, and to be compelled to face those primitive human experiences which are the source of all the theologies of the ages. The average Seminary gives a man so little of that clinical experience which is the special aim of the

Medical school, that the young minister may feel far more at home in the alcove of a library than in a group of men assembled to discuss some public wrong, or in a company of friends gathered to comfort a bereaved household. It is his intellectual salvation to be plucked out of a bookish life, and thrust into the tumultuous and complicated strivings of a neighbourhood, where the noblest and meanest passions of humanity are grappling for mastery. Amid such lurid and pathetic realities, how pale and shadowy seem the classroom discussions! What a flood of light is poured on the old problems by the new emergency! Actually to face the drunkard and the libertine, and pull him out of the miry clay, actually to grapple with the greed of gain as it throttles leading members of the Church, actually to meet the sneers of the scornful with patience, and the objection of the sceptic with candour, to offer some genuine consolation to the man whose last hope is under the sod, and to rejoice with them that do rejoice — which is often harder than to weep with them that weep — this is to gain such insight into human souls as no poetry or fiction or University study can give, and to undergo inevitable revisions of one's formulation of truth."

The first change in Newman was when he found that the sharp division of the old Evangelicals was not borne out by the actual life of men. Bishop Potter took an East Side parish for one of his summer vacations. In such ways his sermons gained the note of reality when they touched upon social questions. It is in this spirit that Ambrose Shepperd of Glasgow says that every preacher might well have one year in a factory. And in his sermons you feel that note of reality that comes from a deep experience. He actually knows how men think and feel and his word meets actual conditions.

Dr. Winnington-Ingram, the present Bishop of London, always speaks on a level with men. There is a wonderful accent of genuineness and humanity, conviction and sympathy, in everything that he says. And he had his training in East London. He learned how men actually lived. He learned to preach on Bethnal Green, where the audience had the liberty of talking back, and freely exercised it. There he learned to feel with men, and speak to their hearts.

2. We can determine to test truth ourselves, pass it through our own experience. Truth thus humanized will be free from speculation and exaggeration. Such truth,

honestly applied to ourselves, cannot fail of the human touch — if we make no demand of our hearers that we have not first made of our own hearts — only, we must not make the mistake of applying the rule of thumb to the visions and agonies of prophets and apostles; we must not imagine that "the mystery of godliness" can be wholly sphered in our personal experience of it. A truer knowledge of the inner life of men, especially the right interpretation of our own experience, will certainly give to the pulpit a closer touch with the human heart.

"Perhaps the chief value of the study of human growth and development is in the reinforcement which comes to the central truths of Christianity when they are interpreted in terms of life. Many theological difficulties are to be solved, not by the pathway of metaphysics, but by a deeper understanding of the spiritual life of man. Perhaps the chief advance which preachers like Robertson of Brighton and Phillips Brooks made on their predecessors lies here. We cannot claim that these modern prophets excel their great forbears in philosophic grasp, in logical acumen, but they clearly do excel in their psychological power, in their capacity for intuition into the hopes

and fears and remorses and aspirations of humanity. They lay bare our hearts; they flash a torch in the secret chambers of imagery; they expose our deepest motives to our startled gaze, and interpret our confused struggle with a seer's insight." (Faunce, p. 183.)

3. The human touch comes from faith in the Christ to meet the nature of man and faith in man to respond to the truth. Its spirit is hopefulness. It believes in the sonship of man and calls it forth. There is no place for censoriousness in a pulpit that is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and knows the struggles and fears of the human heart. A critical mind is necessary that can separate the false from the true, the accidental from the essential. But a positive, hopeful, constructive preaching is that which knows the real nature of man, lays hold of his deepest needs, and awakens and sustains in him the life of the spirit.

The human touch — the brotherhood of the preacher — will express itself in the most subtle and effective ways. It will *permeate* the *message* of the sermon, and make it felt as a word of life. Truth will be regarded not as something thought out, but also felt out, and lived out. The effort will be not

so much to give the opinions about truth, as to connect the message with every man's life. The sermon is not a mere thoughtful and suggestive discussion about some truth of Christ, but the effort, as a messenger, directly to convey his word. Its supreme aim is not the giving of knowledge, but the giving of life.

So, inevitably, the preacher of a broad and sympathetic humanity will not magnify local and individual peculiarities, but dwell upon those truths that are for all men. He will be forever trying to get beneath that form of truth which is temporary and arbitrary, to that which is natural and essential and eternal.

Here, I take it, is the special power of the message of Phillips Brooks. It is so fitted to man, so human in the divinest sense, so essential in its nature, that it has the power of the great heart from which it comes, and adaptation to every man.

The preacher with the human touch will constantly make his appeal to life, will show his kinship with men. His first thought will be to find the point of contact with his audience, and all he says and does will have the aim of helpfulness. Explanation, processes of reasoning, illustration, will have one

test applied, will it commend the word to the hearts of men? Its speech will be human, the best speech of daily life. It will not wear the garments of a profession, it will not speak a peculiar dialect, known to the religious; it will be instinct with life, using such speech as will quickest convey the message to the hearts of men, such speech as you use with men when you discuss matters of common interest. However, let it be remembered that it is no mark of genuine sympathy with men, and never commends the Gospel of the Son of Man, to use careless, irreverent speech.

The spirit of humanness is seen in the whole attitude of the preacher to his people. He is a brother-man, unable to condescend, and too brave to flatter, a man of like passions, strong to rebuke evil and quick to pity the sinner, commanding by virtue of his manhood, and persuading by the reasonableness of his word and the tenderness and sincerity of his feeling.

LECTURE VI. THE MINISTRY OF COMFORT

Isaiah 50 : 4. "The Lord hath given me the tongue of the disciple, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary."

LECTURE VI

The Ministry of Comfort

Austin Phelps in "Men and Books" speaks of the frequent failure of the pulpit in the ministry of comfort. "If there is one thing more obvious than another in the general strain of apostolic preaching, it is the preponderance of words of encouragement over those of reproof and commination. In no other thing did inspired preachers disclose their inspired knowledge of human conditions more clearly. The world of to-day needs the same adaptation of the pulpit to its wants. We preach to a struggling and suffering humanity; tempted men and sorrowing women are our hearers. Never is a sermon preached, but to some hearers who are carrying a load of secret grief. To such we need to speak as to 'one whom his mother comforteth.' What delicacy of touch, what refinement of speech, what tenderness of tone, what reverent approach, as to holy ground, do we not need to discharge this part of a preacher's mission,

and therefore what rounded knowledge of human conditions!"

Dr. John Watson held that the chief end of preaching was comfort. "Never can I forget," he writes, "what a distinguished scholar, who used to sit in my church, once said to me: 'Your best work in the pulpit has been to put heart into men for the coming week!' I wish I had put more. And when I have in my day, like us all, attempted to reconcile science and religion, one of the greatest men of science, who used also to be a hearer in my church, never seemed interested, but when I dealt with the deep affairs of the soul, he would come round in the afternoon to talk it out."

No preacher of our time has spoken more to the heart of his people, and yet after he had resigned his pulpit at Sefton Park, Liverpool, Dr. Watson, in a series of articles in the *British Weekly*, on "It might have been," reviewing his ministry of twenty-five years, regrets his failure in this particular, and says that if he had his life over again, he would more frequently in his sermons have words of comfort.

I. *Cases that need comfort.* It is well to consider some typical cases found in every congregation, that we may understand the

universal, ever present need of the preaching of comfort.

There is the sorrow that comes from the loss of loved ones. Little children are taken with their fresh and innocent lives, and heaven seems to have gone out of earth. Young men and maidens leave us, full of fair hopes and beautiful promises. Men and women in the prime of life, bearing burdens, essential to the home and the Church and society, are stricken down; their lives were bound up with ours, we do not see how we can live without them. Their going is a rude shaking of our lives, we are never quite the same again. Amid all the bright, joyous things of life there is a note of sadness. The aged, the weak, the infirm pass from our sight. It may be like the garnering of a ripened sheaf, but we are never ready for it. The loss may be felt in proportion to their dependence, to the burden and assiduity of our care.

A young minister, considering a change of work, said, "I do not see how I can leave my people. Why! I have either married some one, or buried some one from every home of my congregation." So many families have been bereft that the very church seems sometimes like a house of mourning. With our

youthful vigour, with the warm blood pulsing in our veins, with life all before us, we may ignore the shadows of life. We make our plans and do our work as though death were not. But the familiar words of Longfellow are the truest words of human experience.

> "There is no flock, however watched and tended,
> But one dead lamb is there!
> There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
> But has one vacant chair!
>
> "The air is full of farewells to the dying,
> And mournings for the dead;
> The heart of Rachel for her children crying,
> Will not be comforted!"

Many a mother has buried her dearest hope out of sight, and goes with a broken heart all her days until she is laid by the child of her early love. And I have known an old man of nearly ninety, reticent of his feelings, never revealing his heart to his dearest friends, speak the name in his last hours of the baby girl that he had lost more than sixty years before. These wounded hearts are before us every Sunday that we preach.

There are deeper sorrows than those of death, the tragedies of *moral failure.* A child, seemingly trained with the utmost

care, takes the reins of life into his own hands and drives in the path of unrestrained desire. The youth, once so sensitive and reverent and highminded, has now grown coarse and sceptical and flippant. Lives that began in love and trust have now grown apart. I do not know any dramatic interpretation of this common experience of the silent and gradual alienation of lives equal to Browning's "By the Fireside," in "James Lee's Wife."

> "Who lived here before us two?
> Old-world pairs.
> Did a woman ever — would I knew! —
> Watch the man
> With whom began
> Love's voyage full-sail, — (now gnash your teeth!)
> When planks start, open Hell beneath
> Unawares?"

The glory of the dawn has faded into common day, and though careful to maintain the outward appearance, they both face the hollow mockeries of life. Many a noble woman is bound, to use Kingsley's strong words,

> "O waste of nature — to a craven hound,
> To shameless lust, and childish greed of pelf,
> Athene to a satyr."

There are sorrows where one would least expect them. Not the pains of parting, or of moral failure, but the pains of growing life. The *sorrows of youth* are no less keen than the sorrows of age. There is a time when the youth finds little satisfaction in himself, when the world of life suddenly widens, when he reaches out beyond self after other things and other lives. It is the first sharp sense of the limitation of life. So much to know, so much to do, such heights to attain! The way so steep and rough, the strength so little! When the youth goes to college or school, or enters upon work there is the sudden widening of the horizons of life. The new experiences refuse to be stated in the familiar forms.

> "So many worlds, so much to do,
> So little done, such things to be."
> ("In Memoriam.")

Sometimes it leads to doubt and always to unrest, and often to despondency. Do you remember when you awoke for the first time to the sense of responsibility for others? The old, sweet, care-free life was gone forever, and the burdens of others' sins and sorrows and weaknesses pressed upon your unused faculties with painful force. It is

one of the sorrowful experiences of youth; and the time of vigour and hope and joy, the beautiful days of youth are to some natures of peculiar sensitiveness the period of pathetic sorrows.

There is the *sorrow of loneliness.* There are some lives that are physically separate and isolated. They are left in the world without kindred, the remnant of a broken family, the last leaf on the tree. If to this natural isolation is added the force of misfortune, business reverses, physical weakness, keeping them from active touch in the world's affairs, they are largely shut up to themselves, in the community and yet not vitally of it.

Then there are natures of peculiar sensitiveness, perhaps morbidly so, to whom the world is a rough and unfeeling place, who suffer from daily contact with men, whose feelings are bruised, and pure tastes offended, who do not make themselves understood, who are not only misinterpreted, but under harsh and false judgment. Their timidity is called pride, their sensitiveness exclusiveness. They think themselves incapable and unlovable, and living brings its sorrow. And there is a certain isolation in goodness itself. Higher ideals, purer tastes inevitably tend to separate from the mass of men. And yet,

these very lives have the strongest desire to be one with men and be helpful to them. Robertson in his sermon on "The Loneliness of Christ" describes such lives. "There are times when hands touch ours, but only send an icy chill of unsympathizing indifference to the heart: when eyes gaze into ours, but with a glazed look which cannot read into the bottom of our souls: when words pass from our lips, but only come back as an echo reverberated without replying through a dreary solitude — when the multitude throng and press us, and we cannot say as Christ said, 'Somebody hath touched me,' for the contact has been not between soul and soul, but only between form and form."

Then there is the sorrow of *seeming failure*. The ocean of faith is not always full, and sometimes the tide is out, and the flats of life lie bare and ugly, and full of the malaria of the doubting spirit. The world is not a friend to God. Spiritual forces cannot be estimated by worldly standards, and we are all affected by the sign-seeking generation. Spiritual life does not seem rewarded and "we fret ourselves because of him that prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

To many the attainment of life seems out

of proportion to the discipline and the struggle. There is the sorrow of the unattained. They reach middle life, and there are no great changes; there is the same daily routine, the same daily temptations and the same need of forgiveness at the day's close. Their religious faith is the persistency of long habit more than the outreaching of the living spirit. They expect no great changes in themselves or in others; the forces of life they know, and no more seems possible to them, and their lives sink into a regretful indifference or a restless pessimism. They are too good to enjoy evil and they are not good enough to be happy.

These five are typical cases of sorrow to be met in every congregation. And besides these broad classes, there are special cases to be detected by the pastor who really feels the pulse of his people. The loss of goods, the changes of home, the perplexities of faith, the mystery of suffering, a sense of the world-sorrow.

II. *How shall we minister in our preaching to the comfort of men?*

The first thing we are to do and the best thing we can do, and often the only thing we can do, is to give the *sense of God.* To make men feel the reality of God's person

and presence. You cannot explain the mystery of suffering, but anything that will make God known, or awaken in men the instinctive, latent sense of God will still their fears and quiet the tumults of the heart. You remember as a child waking at dead of night and crying out for father or mother. The answer comes back through the gloom, "What is it, my boy?" That is all you need to know. You do not care to tell your trouble. The fact of your father's presence gives you rest. Just the fact of God is the deepest comfort men can have, and there is comfort nowhere else.

> "I smile to think God's greatness
> Flows around our incompleteness:
> Round our restlessness
> His rest."

The ministry of comfort gives the sense of the reality and certainty of spiritual forces. We see how the resurrection lifted the disciples out of sorrow and depression; the cross and the grave were not the end of the Gospel story, but they were only the steps of a larger life. The sacrificial life is the victorious life. In this spiritual vision they lived and laboured, even counting it joy to suffer for Christ's sake.

Many of the deepest sorrows of men are because of their short-sightedness. They do not see the meaning of their lives. Events and forces touch them and break their plans, or defeat their most unselfish labours, and they question whether the forces of life are moral and spiritual. One is sometimes forced to say with Arthur:

> "O me! for why is all around us here
> As if some lesser God had made the world,
> But had not force to shape it as he would."

To interpret life, to show how it is always moral, all things under law from the eagle's wing to the seed vessel that finds its place in the earth, how that nothing is forgotten, nothing omitted, that God's word in the soul is as sure as God's word in Nature, that "he that goeth forth with weeping, bearing precious seed, shall without doubt come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him," — this is to bring consolation and inspiration to weary and despondent man.

"Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees." "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is

not vain in the Lord." The true preacher should seek to deserve the words of Faber:

> "Thrice blessed is he to whom is given
> The instinct that can tell
> That God is on the field when He
> Is most invisible.
>
> "Blest too is he who can divine
> Where real right doth lie,
> And dares to take the side that seems
> Wrong to man's blindfold eye."

Then we should dwell upon the *present compensations* of life. Our preaching should make the Christian life the most glorious life possible. No man has more reason or right to be happy than the Christian preacher. To feel the divine sanctions of his calling, and to have the vision of its ultimate issue is to sustain in the life a noble optimism. Galton's characterization of the Protestant clergy in his "Hereditary Genius" as "men of a gently complaining spirit" is a serious criticism upon their faith. Our message of cheer must not be a sort of "whistling to keep our courage up," but must be the natural and inevitable outflow of a life that is spiritual and so sees above the cloud rack.

The late Dr. Maltbie Babcock, standing upon our campus one brilliant October

morning, said of a man who has given comfort to many of our time: "Our friend is just like this October morning — no clouds, no mists, no malaria, the air clear to the utmost marge: the very sight of him puts new heart into life." Such a life preaches a normal and shining gospel, it makes "godliness profitable for the life that now is." Is life a struggle? That is what a true man glories in. Does it cost pain and hardship and self-denial? That is true of everything good, and nothing is so good as the life of faith.

And we are not to emphasize the cross at the expense of the natural joy of life. We are to present such a conception of the Christian life that it will seem the only normal life, the life with the greatest treasures and hopes and possibilities here. Paul gives the truest philosophy of preaching in his letter to the Philippians:

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

We must not fail to give the comfort of the Immortal Life. The hope of it hangs

in the sky of human life like a golden promise. Christ does not satisfy our curiosity, but He makes the hope of heaven very real. The infinite spaces are not filled with mysterious dread, but are folded down upon us in measureless benediction. Jesus calls it the Father's house. To tried and suffering men the Apostolic writers ever speak of the heavenly hope.

The hymns that picture the future bliss have been among the chief consolations of the Church. I know it is not the fashion for the modern pulpit to speak much of the future reward or the future punishment. A wise agnosticism leads men to be silent about those things of which Christ spoke so little. But we cannot be wholly silent concerning the undying yearning for life, and concerning the truth revealed by the word and resurrection of our Lord. Souls need this supreme word for comfort. Bernard of Cluny voices it for us:

> "For thee, O dear, dear country,
> Mine eyes their vigils keep;
> For very love, beholding
> Thy happy name, they weep.
> The mention of Thy glory
> Is unction to the breast,
> And medicine in sickness,
> And love and life and rest."

A word about the *spirit* of the *special ministry* of *comfort*. We should always have some definite person in mind to be helped. Thus our words will be kept from unreality and the professional tone, and have the compassion and fitness of a living message.

We are to cultivate a brave, hopeful spirit in all our preaching. The presence of sorrow must not give a minor key to our preaching. Optimism is the only Christian spirit, and by the brave looking upon the best we can put heart and hope into men.

And our preaching must call to practical life and service. There are no more touching words in the Gospel than those of Jesus on the Cross to his mother and to John. To his mother, sorrowing above other mothers, he gave a new love, in the young John; and to the beloved disciple, suffering more than others in the prospect of loss, he gave a new affection and care in Mary. That is the very secret of comfort, that is the way God often gives the oil of joy — it is in new interests and new duties that take the thoughts out of self into a larger life.

Richard Baxter testifies that at one period of his ministry he was singularly unable to comfort his people, his best efforts were in vain until he had led them to take an interest

in the work of the Gospel in other lands. To think chiefly of the personal career may be a losing game. Our friends pass, our powers one by one fail, the story of life is soon told. But to turn from these personal and earthly concerns to fix the thought on the redeemed soul, upon the social good, to lose ourselves in the strong, deep currents of the race, this is to be endlessly, youthfully happy.

How can the preacher have this ministry of comfort? It must not be sought after for itself, but must come springing up out of his own life of sympathy. All that makes the preacher sensitive, thoughtful, appreciative, helpful, will give this element to his sermons.

His own bitter experiences will help him. It is difficult for a man to speak comfortingly whose veins have always tingled with health, who has never seen his most beautiful, earthly hope shattered, who has never walked in the deep and dark valley of the shadow of death. It is often remarked that ministers as a class are no strangers to sorrow. There is some meaning in the suffering that so many of our brothers go through. The best things of our lives have come through suffering. What we learn in sorrow, we teach in song. "I have learned more of the Gospel since my

little boy died," said Bushnell, "than from all the books I have studied."

The study of men who have been great ministers of comfort. I mention two such preachers, — John Watson for the ministry to special cases, and Phillips Brooks for the ministry of splendid, inspiring truth.

In a volume called "The Potter's Wheel" Dr. John Watson has written one of the truest books of consolation in recent years. They are not sermons in form, yet evidently taken from sermons, and always characteristic of the preacher. Take a single chapter on "Broken Homes," where the special purpose is to minister to those who have lost young children. He discourages the effort to try to know too explicitly the reason for such loss, and yet he suggests some spiritual ends that may be gained through such sorrow. Let us remember that we had them for a little while. "No little child has ever come from God and stayed a brief while in some human home — to return again to the Father — without making glad that home and leaving behind some trace of heaven."

In many instances death has been a merciful escape from evils of body or mind. Is it not an unconscious and cruel selfishness of love that would wish for such a child a pro-

longed hospital life? There are worse evils than pain of body; and no one can look on the innocent face of a little child that has fallen on sleep without thanking God for victory before the battle.

"Last night, as my dear babe lay dead,
In agony I knelt and said:
O God! What have I done,
Or in what wise offended Thee,
That Thou should'st take away from me
My little son?

"Upon the thousand useless lives,
Upon the guilt that vaunting thrives,
Thy wrath were better spent!
Why should'st Thou take my little son —
Why should'st Thou vent Thy wrath upon
This innocent?

"Last night, as my dear babe lay dead,
Before mine eyes the vision spread
Of things that might have been:
Licentious riot, cruel strife,
Forgotten prayers, a wasted life
Dark red with sin!

"Then, with sweet music in the air,
I saw another vision there:
A shepherd in whose keep
A little lamb, — my little child!
Of worldly wisdom undefiled,
Lay fast asleep!

"Last night, as my dear babe lay dead,
In those two messages I read
A wisdom manifest;
And though my arms be childless now,
I am content — to Him I bow
Who knoweth best."

(EUGENE FIELD.)

Death leaves behind many peaceable fruits — a certain seriousness of thought and feeling that are not easily learned. Family bereavement also works a singular and beautiful gentleness that can be detected almost without fail in the expression of the eye — in the tone of the voice. And death is a very successful teacher of that faith we all long to possess, the conviction of the unseen. "A young child with Christ does more to illuminate the other world than all the books that ever have been written, and it has often come to pass that at the touch of this unseen hand hard and sceptical men have arisen and set their faces toward God, for the hope of seeing again a golden head on which the sun was ever shining."

Many of the sermons of Phillips Brooks have the ministry of comfort in the largest sense; not in special treatment of a particular case of sorrow, but in such noble treatment of truth and life that the soul is lifted above the

clouds and the shadows. The Easter sermon in the first volume is a good example of this generous, positive method, and I close with two selections from it.

"'I am He that liveth.' He declares continuous, eternal life. There is a long, large life that is not transitory. When we know that just as the children's lives set themselves into the life of their father which seems to them really eternal, just as the leaves, coming and going, growing and dropping, find their reason and consistency in the long, unchanging life of the tree on which they grow; so our lives find their place in this long, unchanging life of Christ, and lose the vexation of their own ever-shifting pasts and futures in the perpetual present of His being. A Christ that liveth redeems and rescues into His eternity the broken, temporary lives and works of His disciples."

"The living Christ, dear friends! the old, ever new, ever blessed Easter truth! He liveth: He was dead: He is alive for evermore. Oh that everything dead and formal might go out of our creed, out of our life, out of our heart to-day! He is alive! Do you believe it? What are you dreary for, O mourner? What are you hesitating for, O worker? What are you fearing death for, O

man? Oh, if we could only lift up our heads and live with Him; live new lives, live high lives, lives of hope and love and holiness, to which death should be nothing but the breaking away of the last cloud, and the letting of the life out to its completion."

LECTURE VII. THE CHILDREN'S PORTION

I JOHN 2 : 13. "I have written unto you, little children, because ye know the Father."

LECTURE VII

The Children's Portion

Horace Bushnell thought it a great blessing for the preacher to turn from men and women with their intricacies and deep profundities of sin and unbelief to children with their natural faith and their easy affinities for goodness. The highest growth for the preacher as well as for his faith is in the childlike spirit. We have not preached well to mature minds because we have not learned to preach well to children. And the late Dr. Maltbie Babcock, nearly fifty years after, gives the same testimony. He felt that preaching to children in connection with the worship of the Church was the great duty and privilege of every pastor. He had found the richest recompense in it. He had seen the faith and growth of young Christians, and he had learned lessons of genuineness and simplicity and brightness for all his public speech.

We feel that public worship, necessary for Christian character, for the maintenance of

the Church and for its world-wide evangelism, is largely a question of habit, and these habits must be formed in childhood. The Sunday school, sometimes called "the children's church," can be no substitute for public worship. Bishop Vincent, who has done more than any living man, perhaps, for the improvement of the Sunday school, has repeatedly said that if the choice had to be made between the Sunday school and the worship of the Church, the child should give up the school and go to public worship. Few thoughtful men will dispute this.

Children need to be with their parents in love for the Church and part in its worship and service. The family is as much the unit in religion as in society, and cannot be separated without serious loss to both. Children need to be trained in reverence, attention, in desire for spiritual truth, in seriousness of thought and purpose, and never so much as now. The ideal of the congregation is all ages and conditions, and for this we are to strive, with all reasonable and persistent method. How shall the presence of the children be gained? I have nothing to say about marks and attendance cards and prizes. Let those use them who think they are of worth. At best, they can

only be the means to an end, and that end is the teaching and training of the children in the religious life. If children are permanently a part of the congregation, then they must be interested and taught and persuaded by the preacher. We must preach to children. How shall this preaching be done?

I. *Common methods of preaching to children.*

One method is a special children's sermon each Sunday morning as a part of the regular worship of the Church, and preceding the regular sermon. It is a common practice in the free churches of England, and followed in this country by here and there a pastor. It makes extra demands upon the preacher, in this country especially hard to meet, and might leave a gulf between the two parts of the service, the children listless and unfed during the service that followed. In fact, in some churches the children are allowed to go out after their portion is given.

Another method is a children's service once on Sunday (taking the place of a second service) or at stated periods, once a month, or once a quarter, the whole service devoted to them, prayers, hymns, as well as sermon being adapted to them. Such a service might be had once in three months, the morning worship and the Sunday school

session united, and some truth of the quarter be chosen for the message. Such a service would not make extra demands upon the young preacher, and it would be the best training for more frequent preaching of this sort. The presence of the congregation would give seriousness to the thought and preparation.

In a few churches in this country, the Sunday school in the afternoon is closed with a short children's service in the church or united with the vesper service of the congregation. In the established churches of England, Scotland, and Germany such a second service is common. At the Kreutzer Kirche, Dresden, I once attended the most impressive children's service, the great church being filled with children in classes with their teachers, one of the pastors leading and speaking, a great chorus of children with the organ, no snatchy, worthless jingles for tunes, but the worshipful music, a simple but noble liturgy, and all the children attentive and taking part. I did not see a single child that was not singing or repeating its part. Of course, the discipline of the German home and school is much stricter than ours, — the children are used to being drilled. But the point is, they were trained in habits of worship.

By another method, no special children's service or sermon is provided, but a special application of the truth to children is given at a certain point of the sermon. It might be done occasionally with good effect, but the habit might interfere with the proper development of the sermon. It would be a break in the thought, and might lead the preacher to the unhappy conclusion that now, having met the child's need, he could devote the rest of the sermon to the adult mind.

Many pulpits have no regular sermon or portion for children, but the effort in every sermon is to make truth so simple that any bright child may understand. The sermon always has the children in view and breathes the childlike spirit. The late Joseph Parker, in spite of his flashes of genius and his profound sayings, had such pictorial and dramatic elements that he always interested children and youth.

"What did you suffer from? fear? Once I feared death." Then he pictured a child afraid to go to sleep in the dark, but the mother's presence took the fear away. Christ has suffered death and there is no fear now. "You cannot learn to swim by standing shivering on the river's brink.

You must throw yourself into the water, as into a mother's arms." "Letters of J. R. Green: 'Send me half a crown in stamps. I will make half a dozen children happy.' That is better than all his history," — such are some of the sayings from a single sermon, bright tales for old and young.

Simplicity always marks the preaching of the Bishop of London. He is not afraid to tell a story in the pulpit. It seems a little strange at first to hear some lowly tale of the East End under the splendid dome of St. Paul's, but you soon feel that it gives a reality to his message and is in keeping with the very spirit of the Master.

"The other day I went to see one of my little friends in a hospital. Jennie had not long to live and she was afraid of death. I said to her, 'Jennie, you would not be afraid if I should come and take you up in my arms and carry you to another room?' 'Oh, no, Sir!' 'Well, that is what Jesus will do.' And then, the next day, when I went to see her, I found that Jesus had come for her, and she was not afraid."

Mr. Campbell of the City Temple is a lover of children and often has a word for them. A recent account of a sermon on Immortality closes with these words: "Noth-

ing was more beautiful than the simple story with which the sermon closed. It was the story of an only child, loved as only children are. It was her father's custom to look into her room the last thing before she fell asleep, and always the little voice would bid him the same farewell. 'Good night, father, I'll see you in the morning.' Sickness came and the beloved child drew near her end. Just at the last, she put her arms around her father's neck and said, with failing breath, 'Good night, father, I'll see you in the morning.' She was right. The little child is always right in the spiritual kingdom."

II. *Examples of sermons to children.*

I take examples of children's sermons from the English pulpit, where the habit has become fixed and the best sermons are preached. The usual way of preaching to children by the free churches is to have a short sermon to children — from five to ten minutes, closing with a special hymn — come in the first part of the service, after the Scripture lessons, between the lessons and the pastor's prayer.

This has been the invariable method of Dr. Monro Gibson at the St. John's Wood Presbyterian Church, London. Sometimes Dr. Gibson will preach both sermons him-

self, sometimes his assistant will preach the sermon to the young. I found it the same at the Crouch End Congregational Church, Dr. Alfred Rowland; the Allen Street Congregational Chapel, Mr. Silvester Horne; and the Westbourne Park Chapel, Dr. John Clifford. Here are four of the strongest Free Churches of London, thoroughly representative, and they all have the short children's sermon, preceding the regular sermon. We may be certain that they have found it helpful, or they would not follow the practice.

Perhaps I can make the matter the clearest by giving the substance of three or four of these sermons.

Dr. Clifford's sermon was a parable from the seashore. He announced no text at first. He pictured a scene and gave its spiritual lessons. He had been, during the week, at Bournmouth on the South Shore. There at ebb tide, on the sandy beach, he had seen the seaweed, dry and apparently lifeless. But as the tide began to come in — these masses of dry weed seemed to be waiting for the tide — and as the first spray touched them, they rose and swelled and drank in their life-giving food, the supply of the sea they were ready and waiting to receive:

their life came from the sea. We are lifeless for higher things without the food of God. We must expect and receive the tide of divine life. There is a tide of divine life upon youth. We must wait and receive: be open and filled.

Here came the text — two verses: "Wait on the Lord: Now is the acceptable time." Youth is God's time. His influence must be received now. The figure of Time with forelock, and bald behind, was used. Quotations from Longfellow and Goethe enriched and enforced the truth. And the sermon closed with lessons from the mistakes of old men, their unreceptiveness, their dried-up and wasted power, their lost opportunities.

The sermon was clear so that children could understand, but so strong as to hold the attention of every mature mind. And the truth had relation to the sermon that followed (the whole service had unity) which was upon building up the Church, especially the use of young lives, drawn from Paul's use of Timothy.

Mr. Silvester Horne's sermon to children was also connected vitally with the regular sermon; it did not anticipate it, and take from it, but when both were spoken, you understood the relation.

The regular sermon was from Romans 6:14. "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace." Sin to be conquered by grace. The children's sermon was from II Corinthians 12:9. "My grace is sufficient for thee." It was developed in the sphere and by illustrations of child life. A child's trouble was pictured — some coveted pleasure interrupted or prevented by accident or weather. His friends, say, his parents, "Never mind, we'll stay and play with you." And in that companionship the loss is more than made good. So the Father's grace is his great gift. Paul could not do his work as he wished, so he prayed. God's answer — my grace. I cannot take away the weakness, but I will give you grace. The strongest thing in the world is the grace of God. And this was enforced by illustrations from child life.

Two other sermons may help to show the variety of the children's sermon. Mr. A. E. Garvie, who was then a pastor, but now has a chair of theology in New College, London, preached upon the scripture doctrine of Immortality, from Psalms 17:15. The thought of the sermon was that the pledge of the future was a righteous life here, and

the form of that future was the likeness to Christ.

The children's sermon was from the picture of Christ in the first chapter of Revelation, the description of Christ in his glory. How did Jesus look? There was no authentic portrait. Painters had tried to give their ideals. Yet there was a certain likeness. Certain things had been handed down by tradition, and there was a certain resemblance to the oldest portraits. Hence the argument that the outward appearance of Christ had been impressed upon his friends and handed down by tradition. Pictures on grave clothes were in a sense true. It was an illustration of the spiritual truth. The face of Christ will welcome us. The legend of Veronica has a truth in it. If we give our lives to Christ, then His own likeness will be found in us. If now Jesus in His grace is seen by us, then the Jesus of glory.

Mr. Clow of Glasgow, now Professor of Homiletics in the Free Church College, is one of the brightest and most enthusiastic preachers of that city. He combines the scripturalness of the expository method with the pictorial and practical power of the topical. His sermon to children was from Luke 19:21. "I feared thee, because thou

art an austere man." He spoke of the wrong idea that children sometimes get of God, thinking of Him simply as a great taskmaster, and so disliking Him. And what a different idea Christ gave us! The idea of God and its effect upon life was illustrated from a child's experience. A boy slept alone and on the wall of his room was a text that his mother put there: "Thou God seest me." And it made him afraid. He had a false idea of God, and that great eye seemed to peer at him through the dark and keep him awake with dread. But the boy became a Christian and is to-day a great public man. He is now always strengthened by the thought of God. And his mother's text, which he once so feared, is now on the wall of his room, and one of the great comforts of his life.

Mr. Clow is the only preacher to children that I heard who did not connect his children's sermon with the regular sermon of the hour. Usually it was a phase of the truth, or the preparation for it, or its application to child life. It was not an interruption of the service of the hour, but added to its unity and fulness of impression.

The children's sermon did not leave the children uninterested and untouched for the

rest of the hour. In every case there was something in the main sermon also for the children, and the children were attentive throughout. Mr. Garvie's sermon was developed in its strongest places by illustrations from child life.

I think that the work of preaching to children had its effect upon the preaching of all these men. They seemed to be conscious throughout that the children were before them, and that the minds once interested must not be left unfed. The sermons were free from abstract and subtle and overrefined trains of thought. They were marked by simple, vivid, and practical preaching.

I asked myself the question why these men should preach a separate children's sermon? It was so much extra work, and if many things in the regular sermon could be understood by children and they could be brought and interested, why have a separate portion at all? No doubt they knew best. The fact that they did so was sufficient argument in its favour. A children's portion would positively attract the children, make them feel their place in the house of God, train them to listen to and understand the preaching, and such preaching would be a rare training in simplicity for the

preacher. We cannot say that they would preach so well without the practice for children. The children's sermon does not prolong the service to weariness, for it does not take as much time as the American quartette choirs take for anthems and solos that often fail to lead the congregation in worship, and leave them listening much in the spirit of the concert hall.

The four sermons that I have mentioned prove that any man who is called to preach at all can also preach to children. They differed in nature and interest, but they were all worthy children's sermons. The men are as varied in gifts as four men could well be. Dr. Clifford is a reformer and philosopher of life; Mr. Horne a platform orator, with fondness for historical illustration; Mr. Garvie a critical and theological student; Mr. Clow is the only one whose general work and qualities seem to fit him particularly for a children's preacher. Yet all these gifts and attainments came into play. The definite purpose in each case helped the man to accomplish the result. One man described a fact of nature, another told the story of a man's life, the others, by descriptions of familiar experiences, and illustrations of child life, made real what is taking place

within the soul. All men alike in their effort to make a single picture, leaving the impress of a single truth.

I refer to a single American preacher to children, Dr. Charles E. Jefferson of the Broadway Tabernacle, New York. It is a surprise to find that he is a children's preacher. He is a thinker, a student, the chief doctrinal preacher, essentially a preacher to men. Yet he has published one of the best volumes of sermons to children, "My Father's Business."

I judge he preaches to children only at certain seasons, for the book seems to be made up of annual sermons. They are so simple and pictorial that the youngest child in church will be interested to get the message, yet so thoughtful and vital that they are almost equally food for mature minds.

All the sermons of the volume are good. Perhaps the first is most characteristic. "Line upon line," Isaiah 28 : 10. He uses the very Hebrew words to gain attention. The lazy, selfish, drunken people of Samaria mock the prophet. "Do you take us for children, always speaking the same things to us?" "Tsar la tsar, tsar la tsar: quar la quar, quar la quar." Boys and girls sometimes talk and act like these drunkards of

Samaria, drunk with anger-pride. "Why, mother, you have told me that twenty times. You are always harping on the same old string."

The theme is, "Why line upon line?" and the plan consists of four very plain steps.

1. They are commanded of God.
2. In order to get these things into your heart, to impress truth and destroy evil.
3. Only a few essentials. As letters of the alphabet, figures in numbers, tones in music, so only a few laws of life.
4. They see what you do not.

   There will be a worse monotony if you fail to heed your parents. Accusing conscience will say, "Line upon line."

The sermon is strong in its use of scripture, and the illustrations of daily life. Take a single illustration:

"It takes a great deal of repetition to get a big idea into a small boy's soul. Did you ever see a pile driver driving piles? The pile driver shoots up into the air a great mass of iron, and without a moment's warning lets it drop upon the head of the pile. The pile does not mind the first blow very much,

and stands almost as proud and tall as ever. But the pile driver keeps right on at its work. It lifts the iron into the air and lets it drop five times, ten times, fifty times, perhaps a hundred times, and by and by the pile is driven down deep into the river-bed, and is so firm and safe that men are not afraid to make it part of the foundation of a house. Fathers and mothers must drive principles into their children's hearts because these principles are the piles upon which the house of character must be erected. It is for your eternal good that precept is placed upon precept and line is placed upon line."

III. *Certain deductions as to the children's sermon.*

1. The text and theme should be pictorial and concrete, — something that will appeal to the experience and imagination of the child.

Richard Newton:

Prov. 30 : 28.	"The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in King's palaces." The spider's example.
Luke 1 : 15.	"He shall be great in the sight of the Lord." The great man in God's sight.

Ps. 119 : 105. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet."
The wonderful lamp.

Jefferson :

Luke 2 : 46. "Hearing them and asking them questions."
The duty of asking questions.

Luke 2 : 51. "And was subject unto them."
The beauty of obedience.

Luke 2 : 49. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"
My father's business.

Luke 2 : 52. "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and Man."
The silent years.

2. The plan should be clear and simple, a very few steps, put in a way to arrest the thought and be held in mind. Questions are good that may arrest attention and call for response. Dr. Richard Newton, the prince of children's preachers a generation ago, was a master in the art of asking questions. His plans were often a series of questions, and his style bristled with these marks

of personal inquiry. Dr. Jefferson's plans are so simple and inevitable as to be easily remembered.

3. The material should be worthy, not simply a string of stories. Respect the mind of the child, but remember that imagination is the great faculty of youth. So illustration will abound, especially such as shall cause the child to use his eyes.

4. The lessons should be unmistakable and drawn for the child, not left to inference.

5. The style should be simple, but not childish, on the level of the child, not speaking down to him. Short words and sentences, the best oral style, not linear measure.

How can we speak well to children? We must remember that those who preach well to children must know children and love children. None so quick as they to tell who are their friends, and who understand them. They are true spiritual barometers. A man who has never had a genuine childhood is not fit to preach to children, nor a man who has forgotten his childhood. "To lose one's love for children, that is a dreadful sort of old age," says George Macdonald.

An admirer of Dr. Clifford's says that the secret of his sway over children and youth

is his resolute belief in Life's unfading charm. "Youth believes that the world is young. Consequently they gather round a preacher who shares their belief. And as he cries in their eager, unspoiled ears 'sin is modern, love is eternal,

> "'Grow old along with me!
> The best is yet to be!'

is it any wonder that so many cleave to him in adoring discipleship!"

Idealism, courage, hope, these are the qualities of immortal youth. The man who has these may laugh at the years.

LECTURE VIII. A MAN'S GOSPEL

I JOHN 2: 14. "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know Him which is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one."

LECTURE VIII

A Man's Gospel

A Scotch elder once remarked concerning three ministers who had served his church: "The first was a minister, but not a man; the second was a man but not a minister; and the third was neither a minister, nor a man." If men are to be won to Christ, it must be by a manly ministry. Professor Münsterberg of Harvard in the *Atlantic* (Nov., 1910) says that the strong men of the colleges are attracted to business and other callings of active leadership and achievement, and that the men of less masculine qualities, who lack the power of initiative, take up teaching and other work of a more spiritual nature.

I do not know how true his generalization, but if there is any large degree of truth in it, it accounts in part for the small proportion of men in the average American congregation. It would be a shame to disparage the worth and work of woman in the church, but a feminine church is not the New Testa-

ment conception and can never be a conquering church. Women and children are easily led into faith. Their natures seem more sensitive to spiritual truth, and they are certainly less exposed to the withering blasts of scepticism, or the hardening and corrupting forces of the struggle for existence. The Gospel has special fitness to men, and makes special appeal to them, and the preachers who embody it, and present it in its fulness, are the ministers to *the fathers* and to the *young men.*

1. The preacher must represent a *manly religion.* He must embody its masculine qualities. John writes to the young men as the *strong ones* (ἴσχυροι). It is equivalent to the Latin "vir" — the embodiment of manly excellencies — what we mean by *manliness.* Mr. Hughes, writing of the power of Charles Kingsley to reach men, noble soldiers and writers and men of affairs, said that he always presented the manliness of Christ, no doubt more or less reflected in his own person.

The preacher must have these qualities to reach men. Three qualities you would say belong to a manly man, and to a manly religion, *loyalty*, *great-heartedness*, and *uprightness.* A manly man will be a seeker of

truth. He shrinks not from its clearest light. He wishes to bring his life and his convictions to the fullest light. He will not be easily content with conventional views, he must prove all things for himself. Once convinced of truth, he is loyal to it, he gives himself to it. The truth possesses him. No plausible sophistries will be suffered to blind his vision. No personal allurements will turn his feet from its path.

Men wish magnanimity and tolerance in their ministers, but they despise an *invertebrate*. They know it is a sign of mental or moral weakness. To say that a minister is on both sides of every question is the charge of incompetence, or cowardice. They honour a man who believes something and advocates it and is willing to suffer for it. They may not accept his creed, but they believe in the man. And this is the first condition of a preacher's work.

And the second element of a manly religion is *great-heartedness*. The Gospel brings its great truths to the heart and profoundly moves the lives of men. Let these truths get possession of the heart, and the tides of feeling pulsate to the extremities of conscious life. Who is the "Great Heart" but Jesus, whose life is radiant with Immortal

Love, who so felt for every man that he got under the burdens of the race.

The intellect is barren until fructified by the heart. "We are but shadows, we are not endowed with real life till the heart be touched. That touch creates us. Then we begin to be, thereby we are beings of reality, and inheritors of eternity." (HAWTHORNE.) And Longfellow finely says of the builder of the ship:

> "His heart was in his work,
> And the heart giveth grace unto every art."

The heart feeds the oil in the lamp of all high endeavour. The great heart is always the element of strength. It is quick to feel and quick to respond. It touches others by its ready sympathy. It gives birth to enthusiasm and inspires to heroic action. Great-heartedness implies large-mindedness, large visions of truth and life, power to interpret and sympathize with men who differ. It always wins men to the person of the preacher.

And *uprightness* is the moral foundation for spiritual gifts and influences. Without this the house is built upon the sand. It means self-control of the faculties and passions of the body, denying the ungodly lusts and obeying the law of purity. It means

a masterful self-control of the mind, denying its vagrant impulses, keeping the faculties at hard and at times unpleasant tasks, that mental power may be developed. It is such self-possession for a true purpose, that the power of body and mind shall be in true harmony, each kept in its proper place, and doing its true work. Uprightness is where the subjection of all the members of life to a wise purpose is the most absolute. And the truest freedom is where obedience has become natural and involuntary.

It goes without saying that moral integrity must characterize a spiritual manhood. Conscience will be clear and strong in a true spiritual ideal. A fine sense of honour will govern all the relations of life.

Ministers, by the mistaken devotion of their people, are sometimes shielded from the hard knocks of the world, and so they may come to feel that they are exceptions to the conditions and obligations of the common man. It is a fatal mistake that eats out the heart of manliness.

Men especially demand uprightness of their minister in three ways.

A fine sense of honour in all financial matters.

He is supposed to live above mere com-

mercial law, yet cannot violate it without weakness and dishonour. To be eager for gain, or to use his position to get things at less than their value, is fatal to influence. He must live strictly within his income, avoid debt as he would the plague, and promptly meet his obligation. To most ministers it must mean the strictest economy, even at times pinching self-denial; but it is the first principle of uprightness, and without it a man's influence counts for nothing. The spirit of sacrifice must mark the ministry, or it utterly fails in its witness and message. And the first demand of self-denial may be in a life of poverty. Whatever the bestowment or withholding of worldly means, unquestioned honesty and simplicity should mark the minister's use of money. One of the most brilliant preachers of New England was lax in money matters, was not willing to practise honest self-denial, until the trustees were compelled to pay his debts for the honour of the church, and compel him to pass on.

Men demand uprightness of the minister in all *sex-relations*. The minister is peculiarly exposed to sexual temptation and more men fail here than from all other causes put together. The minister is welcomed into

the homes and finds himself on familiar terms with women. Often the temperament that makes him a preacher, the sensitiveness to thought and feeling, makes him acceptable to the nature of women. He is appreciated by them and the feeling easily passes beyond admiration. A look of the eye longer than wise, a pressure of the hand, an unguarded touch, we do not know what volcanic passions we may arouse in women and in ourselves. Six of our own men have failed here in recent years and have passed from sight as though they were buried in the sea.

A manly man will have a chivalric sense of honour towards all women, in the case of the weak a spirit of deferential courtesy, which will throw its charm over all, and be likewise an armour of defence. A spiritual man will guard against the beginnings of evil, the first look or word of careless familiarity. The chivalric spirit of Frederick W. Robertson gave his boyhood the romantic worship of womanhood as its ideal, and gave his manhood that reverence for woman and the delicate sense of honour that gained the friendship of women without the first taint of unholy sentiment.

Men know instinctively whether a minister is careless in his relations to women, and

they suspect him accordingly. To be known as a woman's favourite is the sure way of losing the respect of men and of womanly women too.

And then *promptness* in *meeting one's engagements.* Modern business life means order, system, fidelity, despatch, the economy of time and strength, and the same spirit pervades all successful life to-day. It must characterize the minister's work if he is to gain the respect of men. A conscientious regard for the work he has taken means fidelity in preparation and promptness in meeting obligation and opportunity. He must be a man of his word. He must live the gospel of duty. For him duty must wear the "Godhead's most benignant grace."

To saunter into his pulpit behindhand, to be frequently late at his prayer-meeting, to be careless in time and work of his many church or civic appointments, is often the index of loose mental ways, or indifference to the convenience of others. In either case, it is the result of an undisciplined, unethical life. The men of the community can have no deep respect for the preacher who causes them to suffer from his bad habits.

It is said of Dr. Alexander Whyte of Edinburgh that he is the busiest man in Scotland

and the best prepared too. He is always at it, and he is always ready when his time comes.

II. *The minister must maintain a manly relation to men.*

That means that he must try to know them. I know there is a natural shrinking from men. They are often coarse, careless of speech and manner, lacking in respect for religious life, misinterpreting the very motive and effort of the preacher. All your training and tastes and ideals tend to separate you from such men. And they will impose a barrier from their side. They will very likely feel uncomfortable in your presence. The minister's presence may suggest the life they ought to lead, and are not willing to undertake. They do not care to have conscience uncomfortably active.

The minister's very presence should be the voice of the higher life. That's a beautiful story told by Mr. Crooker in "The Church of To-day," of a shopkeeper who said of a certain minister of his city, "Whenever he walks by my shop, I say to myself, 'There goes a true man' and that moment everything good in me feels stronger and I find that it is then easier for me to live as I ought."

Of Norman MacLeod of Glasgow, a man's minister, a shoemaker said, "He kens leather," and a blacksmith said, "When he comes into my shop, he talks with me as though he had been a blacksmith all his life, but he never goes away without leaving Christ in my heart."

We can break through the barriers of men by our simple humanity. We have far more in common with men than any differences. And we can find and assert the common tie. Phillips Brooks did this with the men of Harvard. The service he rendered his Alma Mater as resident preacher was peculiarly prized by him. It is said that during the last service of this kind that he rendered, he went one morning into some students' rooms, as his wont was. He took in the situation at a glance, men who had spent the previous night in dissipation, averted eyes and pallid faces of men who did not care just then to look into their own lives. But Bishop Brooks spoke no word of censure to them. With his great humanity, his bigheartedness, he soon touched matters of common interest, the likes of young men, the college they all loved so well. But when he went out, he said with his deep eyes, and heavy tones that seemed to penetrate into

the very heart of things, "Well, boys, it doesn't pay, does it?" And in that presence their sin turned black before their eyes. They felt ashamed of it. They knew it unworthy of their manhood.

Charles Kingsley knew every man, woman and child in his parish. He always found some common bond of interest that helped him to be a friend and revealed the life to him. Edward Everett Hale gave as one of the three rules of his own life that he tried to rub up against all sorts of men.

And we must believe in men if we are going to be their ministers. We can make no appeal to men unless we believe in them, believe in their capacity for goodness. Fronting the facts of life with open eyes, we must still hold to the divineness of life, the noble, heroic qualities of the common man, and that the majority are not incarnations of evil.

"Through one another — through one another —
No more the gleam on sea or land —
But so close that we see the brother —
And understand, and understand!
Till, drawn in swept-crowd closer, closer,
We see the gleam in the human clod,
And clerk and foreman, peddler and grocer,
Are in our family of God."

(James Oppenheim.)

Mr. Stokes well says in "A Ministry to Men," "The man who would draw back the Protestant masses to the church must have faith in them. The minister who talks of 'our immigrant rabble,' who has no confidence in plain people, will never fill his church with wage-earners. Whether we like it or not, we are more than blind if we do not see that we are living in a democratic age, an age in which the people are growing in power, and are impatient of domination from 'above.' This being true, the minister who wishes the common people to hear him gladly, as they did Jesus of Nazareth, must have a large faith in them."

"The faculty of seeing things to love in individuals and taking them into his personal regard is the tap-root of his influence. He sways the masses and wins their heart just because there are to him no masses" was said of Henry Ward Beecher.

The minister must identify his life with the community. He should love his place, bearing his burden, rejoicing in its life, a citizen first of all. He should love his place as Samuel Johnson loved London, loved its "central roar," or as Phillips Brooks loved Boston. After a summer in Europe, the latter looked from his study window over

the long stretches of tile roofs and exclaimed that it was the most beautiful sight in the world. It meant home and human lives and his work. And that is what your own town or city may mean to you, in spite of its commonness or ugliness, the most beautiful place in the world, because home and friends and ministry. "What a dreary view you have here, Mr. Ruskin," said a friend one day of his London home, "nothing but waste water and old junk!" "Oh, I don't feel so," replied the great prose-poet, "for when I look out, I always see the sky."

The minister, by his large interests, his broad humanity, his public-spirited service, can recover the meaning of parson, and make men rejoice to recognize him as "our minister."

III. *He must preach a manly gospel.*

1. That means a thoughtful gospel. A minister that is not thoughtful in his work, that is not a systematic student of the great problems of religion and life, cannot minister to the men of the community. They will not go to church from force of habit. They will be attracted only by a worthy message. It must be the best thought of the time on the questions of religion. It must appeal to man by its reasonableness, in accordance with the

revealed nature of God and the nature of man; a fair, just, balanced view of truth and life. I do not see how it is possible to present a balanced view of truth and life without preaching the Christ in his simplicity and fulness. And to preach Christ in any real and large way is to preach a manly Gospel.

It is possible to present the exceptional qualities of Jesus, those that make him unique, such as purity, love, forgiveness, humility, in a non-human way, so that they will seem unreal and unrealizable, too good for human nature's daily food, unworkable in this world where men toil and struggle and suffer.

2. It must have the authority of expert knowledge and experience. The preacher is a moral and religious teacher. He cannot be an authority in everything. It was said of Dr. Whewell, who became an English archbishop, that his foible was omniscience. And it is certainly a weakness in the pulpit to go beyond the field of religion and morals. When any question of work, society, and the state rises directly into the moral realm, the preacher cannot keep silent without losing his power, but he must guard against the assumption of an easy omniscience. Nothing is so cheap and easy and worthless as words.

He must guard against partial and ill-balanced views. There is the greatest danger to-day in an earnest pulpit dabbling in too many things. Men will lose respect for our word if it is careless and ill-judged and exaggerated. Not without reason does James say: "Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive greater judgment. For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also." (3 : 1–2.)

3. It must be ethical rather than sentimental, strong more than beautiful, and making its appeal to conscience. This agrees with a recent characterization of Dr. George A. Gordon: "He is such a combination of mind and heart, both in quantity and quality, that his emotion and enthusiasm never seem sentimental, and his intellectual expression never cold."

4. It must be a Gospel that can be lived, practical helps for daily life. And it must not fail to present the largeness of the Christian life, and lay great obligation upon a man's strength. "When the church offers a man's job, then it can claim and have a man's life." (Pinchot.)

It is evident that the life of young men is

full of idealism. That is particularly true of college men. "They are quick to respond to the claims of Christ." And it is true of men everywhere. The age is commercial rather than materialistic. Men are compelled to think of the economic basis of life, but it is not in the mere getting of things, but in their use for man that the zest of life consists.

And the age is full of movements that promise a better life, and any movement, however idealistic, — visionary, if you will, — does not call in vain for recruits. Mr. Robert Speer says that the way to reach young men is to appeal to the heroic, and the work of the Student Volunteer movement, and the Y. M. C. A. in its foreign work, is shining proof of the truth. They do not need to call a second time for any work that needs a man's energy and devotion. Once at Harvard, Dr. Grenfell called for four volunteers for his summer work in Labrador, and he had the men before he left the room.

Here, I take it, is a good lesson in psychology for the preacher who would reach the men of his community with the Gospel. Is it not to preach a Gospel that demands the whole man, and all a man can do? "A

man's job" — that's the natural expression of a man. The energy of large use, the achievement of efficiency is the mark of life everywhere. Every man desires three things by virtue of his manhood.

A proper self-expression — you hear the common term to-day of self-realization;

The proper use of his powers and so a worthy achievement;

And the adequate reward of his labours, or the appreciation of his life.

I think it is our business in preaching to help men to see that the greatest things are not the visible and material, and that the deep desires of a man's heart can only be realized by a life of Christian faith and devotion. Christian faith brings out the noblest expression of the man. In fact, Christianity may be called God's way of making a man. Henry Drummond taught us to think of Christianity in this way — not as something imposed upon us, but exactly fitted to our nature and necessary to its completest development and use. And it makes all the difference with the man whether his powers are used for some personal and selfish end, or for the highest good of others as seen in the kingdom of God. And the highest honour of life is to have a part in that king-

dom into which the very nations shall at last bring their glory.

It is a practical demand of men to have a work that is worth while. It is inevitable that they should test our gospel by its use for the largest life. In this respect the claim of pragmatism is just and convincing.

The devotional test which the pulpit sometimes lays upon men is not true enough or large enough for the whole of life. You might just as well draw a regiment of soldiers around the Church to keep men out, as ask them to subscribe to certain creed statements, or publicly talk about their religious experience, or lead the devotions of men. However valuable these acts are for certain men, they cannot be imposed as a test of faith, or the necessary means of its growth. It is an age of action, but an age growingly reticent about its deepest feelings.

I think we should preach the Gospel so that its ethical demands shall rest upon the conscience of men. It is to permeate all life, and to govern and sanctify all its relations and activities. And this must mean a social Gospel. Christ must be made a master of all men. He must not be shut out of any haunt or sphere of man.

"This is the Gospel of labor, — ring it, ye bells of the kirk —
The Lord of Love came down from above, to live with the men who work."

(VAN DYKE, "The Toiling of Felix.")

And the men who hear this Gospel and catch its note of humanity and brotherhood cannot live for themselves, but must do their part towards a better race and a happier earth. This is the vision of the Kingdom of God which makes the loudest call to the men of our age, and which our age specially needs. The preacher who puts his truth in the ethical and social form of the Kingdom of God makes the noblest appeal. It was Christ's distinctive message and his great imperative: "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God."

Such a pulpit has a manly message for a world of men. The words of Kipling apply to the preacher, as well as to every genuine toiler,

"Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your ways,
Balking the end half-won, for an instant dole of praise.
Stand to your work and be wise, certain of word and pen,
Who are neither children nor Gods, but men in a world of men."

LECTURE IX. THE PREACHER'S GROWTH

ISAIAH 40 : 4. "He wakeneth my ear to hear as they that are taught."

LECTURE IX

The Preacher's Growth

Growth is the law of life. Every living thing grows. When growth stops, death begins. Man is higher than other earthly life in the power of his growth. He has the power of an ever unfolding, expanding, endless life.

"Finds progress man's distinctive mark,
Not God's and not the beast's: God is, alone, they are.
Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be."

("A Death in the Desert.")

A live preacher should be a shining example of the law of growth.

The age demands this growth in the preacher. He cannot be an exception to the condition of success. Its enterprise, its struggle, its hope of mastery, call for a growing life. It sounds the note of efficiency. It calls for an increasing mastery of the powers and materials of work. It is ever calling for the vision and courage and energy of youth. It is seemingly ruthless in its treatment of weakness and neglect. "Take

the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents" is the inevitable judgment upon the man that fails to grow. The dead line, the arrest of growth, wherever reached, is a bar to usefulness.

The charm of a young minister, the demand for young men in the churches, is in large part the promise of growth. He is to be a stronger, wiser, better man, and all the forces of the Church are to develop under the leadership of his expanding, enriching life. He has the potency and promise of success.

And the very message of the preacher is the gospel of the new man. Christianity is full of personal and social hope. It is ever calling to the possible man, that the man that is to be may arise and hear God's voice and enter into the life of a son. The Gospel demands and gives a growing life. The personality of Christ is the quickening and unifying force for the individual and the race. A stagnant minister is a denial of the power of the Gospel.

The best work of the preacher is conditioned by his growth and gives incentive to it. He must be a wise householder that bringeth forth things new and old from his treasury. There are but few principles of

religion and those need endless iteration; but only a growing soul can repeat them so as to form a literature of spiritual power. Truth is not a discovery made once for all, stored up to be used at demand. But truth is a life never fully attained, ever struggling and learning, ever seeing and doing more because of its growth.

It is growth that sustains the ideal, the vision of what ought to be and what can be by the grace of God. It does not suffer the soul to rest in any comfortable and low content. A living message, the truth for to-day, and not the scribe's dull repetitions of yesterday, must be the word of a life that is ever learning.

And the true preacher finds in the very conditions of his work the greatest incentive to growth. He seeks for permanent relations with men. He is not like the teacher who must give the same lessons to changing classes. He is not like the evangelist who repeats the same truth to different communities. Such men may find little growth in their work, and it is almost a miracle if they escape mental hardness and sterility. But the true preacher moves on with his class. He ministers to the same lives in childhood and youth, in manhood and old age. There

must be the growing truth to feed the growing life. He cannot be the spiritual leader of a generation, making a wholesome impression upon the community, giving fruitful life to all that he touches, without that vitality of faith that comes from an increasing understanding and appropriation of the truth. To build the church means to build the preacher.

The *hindrances* to the preacher's growth are many and subtle. They lie in the very nature of the man and his work. The pulpit, with other so-called learned professions, is naturally, perhaps necessarily, conservative. The lawyer deals with statutes and precedents, and seeks to guard what has been gained. The doctor is under the power of great examples, but deals with material of nature and life that is ever open to new interpretation. The preacher has an historic faith, deals with a body of truth, often put in great creedal forms, and is inclined to study the past and rest upon what has been found.

The pulpit has a strong tendency to mental and moral fixedness. Amid the shifting and passing persons and opinions of earth is the abiding word, and the preacher too easily identifies his personal creed and work

with the unchanging and the eternal. The Christian pulpit is rightly conservative of what is true and best, but it is fatal to character and power to make this a bar to progress.

We must repeat simple and fundamental truths; men will always need to be taught the elemental things of faith, and this fact may tend to a routine that has no vision, no joy of first discovery. There are men who repeat the truths they have been taught, who never find for themselves, who simply receive, who have not the hunger of the seeker, to whom the world is never new. They are the pessimists of the routine. "That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun." (Eccl. 1 : 9.)

And yet, there never was such possibility of spiritual progress. This is the age of vision. The philosophies, born of new sciences, a larger study of religion, a finer sense of responsibility, born of the social consciousness, are bringing to men new views of truth and duty. Every day sheds its new light upon the world, and at night God flings his visions across the skies.

The word of God, in its more vital inter-

pretation, the unfolding of our own nature, bringing to every man insistent questions, the movements of thought and life that often have such far-reaching and radical intent, the stirrings of nations, breaking the bars of isolation and intolerance, and throwing wide open the doors of opportunity, — all bring their visions. And yet the preacher may be so under the power of routine as to see little or nothing of all this. I have seen a man in the heart of a great empire, just awakening to the sense of race-consciousness, the new social and moral ideals all around him fairly seething with new life and calling for leadership and expression, — as dull and dead to all this — a blind mole lost in the minutiæ of his work — as though he were hid away in the most isolated corner of America. The forces of his work and the very laws of habit may make the preacher a man with a closed mind. Where there is no open vision, the prophet's voice is not heard and the people perish.

Then the preacher may easily be lost in the details of his work. The modern church is so highly organized that he may forget his great mission in visitings and circulars and clubs. He may be the busiest man in town and yet leave his first task unfulfilled. There

may be growth in social management, but not in the intellectual and spiritual power of a Christian teacher, and leader. Plans of self-training may yield to the pressure of secondary demands. There may be no hard, consecutive work on the things that make the preacher.

"Preaching is your highest business. Nothing can ever take its place. You are to be administrators, but administration will not fill the place of preaching. Unless you are preachers, you are not likely to have much to administer. You are to be organizers, but the organizing gift will never compensate for the lack of the gift of preaching. Men who cannot preach have ordinarily little to organize. When you see a man at the head of a large and living church, displaying large gifts of organization and administration, do not suppose that these are the gifts by which his church came into being, or which keep it glad and strong. He or some one else created it by preaching. Unless a man knows how to present truth in such a way as to get it into the blood of those who hear him, he need never hope for a living, growing, conquering church, no matter what other gifts he may be possessed of." (JEFFERSON, "Building the Church," page 279.)

The preacher's life goes into his word. Virtue goes out of him at every vital message. There can be no cautious withholding if faith is to be communicated to men. All the treasures of life, the deepest and fullest personality, must be imparted by the preacher who makes the Gospel a living word.

It is the costliest expenditure known to man. No wonder that the candle of life burns low and the pulpit sometimes gives a feeble and flickering light. No wonder that the fountain of life is drained and the sermon is like a brook with only stagnant pools. The body must be full of light. There must be a well of water within ever springing up. The gathering must be as rich and constant as the spending. Life must be kept at the full if the pulpit is to be real and vital and commanding. The preacher must aim at the full-grown man, through the ever increasing process of intellectual and spiritual culture.

The social, sympathetic side of many a preacher has been his undoing. He has not had the courage and resolution to face the lonely tasks of study and meditation, the patient and thorough processes of large preparation. An agreeable or lazy good nature has taken the easiest course, has shirked the

discipline of the prophet. There has not been the large prevision for himself and his church, looking through the years, not the purpose for growth and service that holds its way, cuts its way through whatever obstacles. Life has lost the force and rush of the mountain stream, and now takes its sluggish and meandering way through the alluvial of the plain.

"What is the matter with your friend? He does not grow, he has not fulfilled the promise of his youth," was said concerning a minister of marked gifts and lovable nature. "Oh," was the reply, "he spends too much time, too many morning hours, on dry-goods boxes."

The very temperament that makes the preacher may keep him from the highest and best of which he is capable. The artistic nature, the sensitiveness that responds to the environment, may not always find in his hearers the tastes and demands of spiritual and enduring work. It may not be popular to be thoughtful and thorough. It may bring quicker and larger returns to be sensational and shallow. The people may not wish the preacher to bring them the fruit from the very highest boughs of the tree of life. Shall the preacher simply meet the popular de-

mand, be "unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice," or shall he try to awaken the deeper hunger of the soul and satisfy it? In all his work shall he build after the pattern in the mount? Shall he be strenuous of this higher reward, though the world be adverse to desert?

"There are no more subtle or powerful temptations in the modern world than those which beset the oratorical temperament, face to face with the swift judgments and imperative demands of a great popular audience. Let each one of us look about him and see that the gravest tragedies of the pulpit are not those of men who have lost their places, but those of men who have kept them by descending in spirit." (FAUNCE, "Educational Ideals of the Ministry," page 262.)

When Robert W. Dale became the pastor of Carr's Lane Chapel, Birmingham, in succession to Henry Angell James, he began to preach carefully prepared expository sermons, as the best form for himself and his people. He was met one day by a minister of much experience and power, of the fervent type, who said to him, "I hear you are preaching expository sermons to Carr's Lane; they won't stand it." "They will have to stand

it," was the determined reply of young Dale. The reply was not arrogant and dogmatic, but a glimpse of the noble plan of work which would take the whole man and years of consecutive service, and which gave the promise of the richest returns in character and service. It is possible that Dr. Dale might have been a more popular preacher, but it is hard to see how he could have been truer to a nobler conception of his office, or how he could have served the church and generation better.

In what direction should the preacher strive to grow?

He should grow in the knowledge of his speciality, the religious truth and life of men. He is the forthteller for God, an interpreter and teacher of the spiritual life. Influence he has from his position and Church and Bible, but his real authority must spring from his recognized knowledge and character. Men must never say, "He talks easily of the greatest truths, of which he knows no more than the rest of us," — he is to be an expert in his work, an expert of the Christian religion, whatever interprets the Bible and other religions as they throw light upon Christianity, and the religious experience of men.

There must be a growing perception of truth, and a growing appropriation of it for the prophetic spirit. There can be no spiritual leadership without this — the reading of the hearts of men, the understanding of their difficulties, and the ministering of the divine life to them. Every man is a part of his age; the age forms the problems of the religious life. And the growing interpretation of truth is the effort to incorporate Christianity in the life of each age. Truth is the same, but the conception of it must grow, if it is to be living and life-giving. A man's faith is not a child's faith, though one will grow out of the other. Paul felt so, — when he became a man, he put away childish things; and in any life where religion is supreme, faith has been an attainment.

Dr. Clarke closes his "Sixty Years with the Bible" with a beautiful confession as to the growth of his Christian life. "I might have tried to live until now upon the ideas of the Bible and of God to which I had attained at the end of the fifties of the nineteenth century, true ideas and not unworthy then, but too small, too unreasoned, too ill-supported, too unspiritual, for the needs of my later years; and I was glad that I could say to God and to my own soul that

I had spent the lifetime of a man in enlarging, deepening, and correcting the ideas that as a child I had received, and in seeking better foundation for a better faith."

The preacher should grow in his fellowship with men.

Friendship is the key of life. It unlocks the closed doors of indifference and prejudice. Life should lie open ever wider and wider in its interests and relations. Many a preacher stands in an ever narrowing world. His professionalism or eccentricity leave the mass of men untouched. His lack of magnanimity and his narrow interests make a cell of life and not a hospitable mansion. To be a friend of man is the highest ideal for any life.

Robertson was the master of the spiritual capacities because he was able to put himself in the place of others. "He was thus enabled to reveal men to themselves, to tell them what their life meant, and how to idealize it and ennoble it; to draw out in them what was best and highest; and all this with a gracious tact, due also to his sensitiveness, which seldom did too little, and never went too far."

Henry Drummond, who was a prophet to the young men of his day, had a genius for friendship. And Dr. John Watson, who

interpreted the Gospel in the terms of the widest human interest, overflowed with humanity. It was said of his university days, "Wherever you put him down, he will be a friend to the man at his elbow."

The preacher should grow in spiritual wisdom, the power to interpret life and minister to it aright.

Every man makes mistakes, he must serve his apprenticeship, but the years should bring the fruits of ripened experience. It is a great tribute to a man to say that he speaks the fitting word and does the right thing. It means the growth of gentleness and large-mindedness, of sacrificial love and of a far-seeing faith.

The preacher should grow in instructive, persuasive speech.

Art is long, and preaching is the longest and hardest of all arts. It does not come of fluent speech. It may be a fatal hindrance to the highest use. Life must be rich, if speech is to be of worth. The training of life comes to fruit in the words of our lips. The best speech is only approximate in the expression of truth. And how can we put the great thoughts of God into our rough moulds! The exhortation of St. James might be oftener repeated, "Be not many

teachers!" But it is our business to preach, to speak better, to gain increased mastery of the most wonderful instrument of life, to honour the word.

How shall the preacher's growth be gained? It can never be gained save by planning for it. Growth will come through service, a live preacher will be trained by his calling; but even the service will decline without the systematic enrichment of life. The ceaseless giving of the preacher demands a ceaseless getting. How often a minister's library tells the story of his life! The books of college and seminary days, when his intellectual life was under guidance, a few books of popular fiction, a few current magazines and a church paper or two, — a scanty record of weekly thinking. The strong new books are not there, the new light upon the Bible, the modern interpretations of great truths and of the life of the age, the records of dynamic movements. A preacher must be alive to his fingertips, if he is to minister to an age like ours.

No man should enter upon his church year without a plan that shall in a large sense cover his private study and his public teaching. There is no planless growth. There is no strength of the Church that is not

built up step by step. The plan will save life from being broken into unrelated fragments, from being squandered in useless trifles. It means a large vision of life, the redemption of its time, the vitalizing of its powers, the worthy accretion of the material and sense of message.

"The preacher can plan his studies in theology, history, biography, and poetry, — four branches indispensable to a man who wishes to be a master-teacher of men. Certain subjects will be assigned to each of the years, and certain volumes will be set apart for each of the months, and no sort of conspiracy on the part of men or devils will be allowed to break down the minister's determination to pursue the prearranged course to its end. Desultory reading and spasmodic study have slain their thousands. A man who forms a clean-cut plan and clings to it heroically through the oppositions of the years is a man who advances in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and men." (JEFFERSON, "The Building of the Church," page 264.)

The phrase "a good mixer" may stand for a cheap and superficial kind of minister, but it voices a demand for the knowledge of life that can come only from a sympathetic

contact. The many current discussions, such as Mr. Francis Leupp's, in a recent *Atlantic*, are not always intelligent criticisms of present theological training, but they rightly insist that the preacher must be trained as a man of humanity and not a man of a class. Not only his duties, but his recreations, should bring him close to the haunts and bosoms of men. He should make a cult of friendship. For the sake of his own manhood he needs to grow in heart-life, to grow in sympathy and appreciation and hopefulness, in all that will strengthen his kinship with men.

And then the preacher must love his calling above every other, rejoice that he is alive, with such opportunities of loving service and growing speech. He would be nowhere else and do nothing else in the world. He would cherish all the high traditions of his profession and eagerly use the means for a nobler message and a more winning speech. The preacher must be alive if he would be the interpreter and transmitter of a living word. Like his master, he comes that men may have life and have it abundantly. Only as he is open to the messages of God, only as the life of humanity sweeps through his own being, can he voice the meaning of God and lead men into the fulness of life.

Such a preacher will never grow old. Life will have its unfading interest and charm. Truth will never lose its wonder. The work of helping men into a better life will never grow dull. He will have the abiding spirit of youth. He will bring forth fruit in old age. It would be well if we talked less of the dead line of the ministry, and thought more of the power of an endless growth. Mr. De Morgan, the English artist and novelist, wrote "Joseph Vance" at sixty-seven, and began a new day for the English novel. Our Dr. Weir Mitchell, the eminent physician and writer of Philadelphia, kept adding to our delight in story and poem as though he were a man of forty. And Alexander Maclaren was still a matchless preacher at eighty-two.

"Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was made.
Our times are in his hand,
Who saith, 'A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God; see all, nor be afraid!'"

LECTURE X. THE PREACHER AND HIS AGE. TIMELINESS

I Cor. 9:22. "I am become all things to all men that I may by all means save some."

Rom. 12:2. "And be not fashioned according to this age.

LECTURE X

The Preacher and His Age

"Dangerous or not, I will preach it. Twenty and two years have I seen truth made of no effect by trying to suit it to circumstances. I will have none of it. I will make myself all things to all men; but I will keep truth the same, immutable and eternal." (Charles Kingsley.)

"The preacher should be the child of his age. The atmosphere which he breathes is that of the age in which he has been born. He is the son of that special epoch. He owes it reverence, but he does not owe it, nor any age, servile homage or thoughtless flattery. Reverence the age in which you live, but do not dread it. Yield it the homage which all those born in it are bound to give it, but do not be enslaved by it. To put this in another form, you must be in your age, but you must not be wholly of it. Recognize that you are the child of your age. Resolve not to be its slave." (Bishop Boyd-Carpenter.)

The two quotations from Paul and the

words of Charles Kingsley and Dr. Boyd-Carpenter present the seeming contradictions of preaching to one's age, — the timely and the eternal elements of the Gospel. The preacher is to be in the world, yet not of it; child of his age, understanding it, sympathizing with it, speaking its language; fitting his message to its deepest need; its real leader and teacher, — yet above his age, so that he shall see the long past from which the life and truth of his age have come, and able to see the better age to be, and work for its better realization; and able to present the life that shall be the divine answer to every age, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, "the eternal contemporary" of the race. I wish to take up these thoughts one by one.

I. We are children of the age. We draw our nourishment from the soil of our age; we breathe the atmosphere of our age. In a very real sense we are what the age makes us. We cannot separate ourselves from the life of our time. The age? What is it? This composite, this present expression of manifold persons and forces, this intangible, yet all-pervasive spirit of the air. It gives us our ideas, it shapes our habits, it offers our opportunities.

II. And we must understand our age. It is close to us — the very air we breathe — and we are a part of it; and this very closeness, this vital inseparable relation, may make it hard for us to understand our age. It is hard to objectify it. It is hard to get out of its smoke and its dust, to look at it with our reasons and not with our prejudices. It may be easier to know the age of Calvin than that of Moody or Phillips Brooks, to analyze the doctrines of the Westminster Confession than to understand the real belief of men about us. The one may be found and studied in authoritative books; the other takes the sympathetic heart and the slow impress of long and patient brooding and fellowship.

I once went with a small boy to the Central Park Zoo in New York. Like nearly all boys of his age, he was intensely interested in animals, and a more animated and happy boy it would have been hard to find. After several hours it was hard to get him away from the cages of the animals.

The next day we went to Boston and while there visited the Peabody Museum at Harvard, and here was a larger world of animals, but all lifeless and fixed, the record chiefly of the past. The boy was absolutely lost in wonder. He dwelt in fairyland. And

at the end of the day I said to him, "Which do you like better, the Central Park Zoo or the Peabody Museum?" I confess to a great surprise at the answer. Instantly he said: "The Peabody Museum. The animals are fixed, you know, so that you can really see them."

The past has become fixed in some great forms so that we may study and know them. The present is in motion, swift and ceaseless as a weaver's shuttle, and we do not always know the pattern we are weaving.

To know the age in the sense of knowing the men and women of the age, and in that larger sense of knowing the environment of life; the theories and hopes that form the ideals of men, the spirit that controls their actions; the social and industrial and moral forces that make the work and life of men; — this is the interpreter's call and difficulty. We must try to know man as the individual and man as a part of present-day humanity, if we are to preach to our age.

III. And we must appreciate the life and truth of our age. It is easy to fail here. We may easily be the critic of our age; it is the severest and noblest task to be the interpreter of the age. Our studies may glorify the past. The men and institutions may seem large

in the distant haze, as the features of a landscape. Or the visions of the future may so shine in our eyes that we shall be almost blind to the life in which we move. We may think of its crudeness and failures, its littleness and unbelief.

I do not believe any man can help his age unless he rejoices in it, unless he sees the forces for good and strengthens them, unless he believes in the noble possibilities and calls them forth. To be honest and fearless critics is often our painful duty, but the pessimist is powerless to help. A man must believe in his age, if he is to speak to its heart. The Christian optimist is the wisest leader.

Dr. John Owen, the Puritan, was a great theologian and he thought profoundly upon the truths that were emphasized by Puritan theology. But he was as profoundly ignorant of his own age and called the philosophy of Sir Isaac Newton fatal to the authority of Scripture. How many times have Christian teachers repeated the folly of the council that condemned Galileo! Dr. Hitchcock of Amherst was thought an enemy of religion because he found the bird-tracks in the Connecticut limestone and argued long, progressive ages of creation. Horace Bushnell was denied Christian standing because he

saw the spirit of God working in other ways than the traditional ones of the Church; viz. in the quiet, pervasive process of the home and the school. One of our churches was closed to Professor George Adam Smith because the officers heard that he was a higher critic. A professor of a western university, who was also an officer of a church, asked for the name of a minister who would not take every occasion to denounce the theory of evolution as atheistic.

It is the greatest blunder to think that every movement of thought is hostile to faith. It is intellectual and spiritual myopia. The same faith which wrote the great confessions is busy to-day on mission fields, in hospitals and schools, in industrial betterment and social righteousness. The very interest in this earth, the passion for knowledge and possession and pleasure is the craving of man for a higher life and may be turned in the end to the accretion of faith. The new light that critical and historical study has brought to the Bible, the new light in which scientific thought regards nature and man, is not of the Evil One. To say that the Devil was the first higher critic solves no problem, sheds no new light. We believe in the living Lord, if our faith is more

valuable than the pride of opinion. His spirit cannot be shut up to those who teach certain approved opinions. He is the spirit of all true work, of all that shall add to the knowledge and well-being of man. "He is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." What is true in nature is just as true as that which is true in religion. And both are the word of God. If evolution is the best working hypothesis of life, then it should furnish the strongest helps to faith. We can see that last of all he sent his son, and that the future of the sons of God is the development of the spiritual principle of life.

"It is the office of science to discover truth; it is the function of the Church to make all facts live in the lives of men. The one illuminates the face of nature; the other vitalizes human hearts with ethical motives. Therefore, the more truth scientific discovery may present to the world, the greater the need of the Church to make this truth effective and productive in human character. The swifter the progress of knowledge, the larger the necessity and the opportunity of the minister.

"Probably one of the chief reasons of the present weakness of the Church is the fact

that so many ministers have not come out into the real modern world and laid hold of its vast resources and applied them to human life, in behalf of piety and morality as ought to have been done. Overburdened with fading traditions and fettered by archaic forms, clergymen have often spoken in feeble and flattering tones, when in fact the world is full of newly discovered truths that reveal God more fully than ever before, and that ought to have been used to enforce moral law. The permanent duty of the Church is to transform truth into life, and the present increase of knowledge enlarges this duty." (CROOKER, "The Church of To-day," page 138.)

The social idealism to-day that demands a restatement of truth is the work of Christian love. Many good men fear the movements of democracy. They regard the voice of the people as a demon, not the voice of God. But, in spite of many harsh and discordant cries, we must believe, as we believe in the living God, that the spirit that regards the humblest man as of worth, and is trying to write this into the law of the nations, giving to every life a chance for use and growth and joy, is from him who so loved men that he gave himself for them. "Every one that

loveth knoweth God." And surely the spirit of humanity, the social consciousness, the most distinct mark of our generation, will give the Church a more adequate conception of redeeming love, and make the Church a mightier force for the kingdom, whose very law is love, the filial spirit towards God and the fraternal spirit towards men. The sense of imperfect life, the desire to help, the practical love, is bound to express Christian truth in terms of life.

IV. We must speak the language of the age. It is easy for religion to have a speech of its own apart from the language of life. It comes from the historic nature of the Gospel, its truths given definite expression and handed down through successive stages of creedal form. And all men who do certain things belonging to their work become accustomed to doing them in a more or less fixed way. They move in ruts or grooves of thought and speech, and in so far as this is so, it may become a lifeless thing. We have all heard Christian truth spoken in such a way that it seemed a far-away echo.

We must speak in the language of the age if men are to understand us. It must be as real as farms and factories, as business and politics. The power of Mr. Finney's preach-

ing was that he threw away the theological terms and the formal methods of the preachers of his time and clothed the Gospel truths in the garments of present life. And Mr. Beecher did the same. All life mirrored the truth, and the best speech of daily life was instinct with the Evangel.

V. We are to speak the truth adapted to the age. That there is a proper adaptation of the Gospel finds ample warrant and illustration in the New Testament writings. It is probable that the different forms of the Gospel narrative came not only from the special nature and experience of the writer, but were governed also by the needs of the people for whom they were prepared. Both the doctrinal and the practical emphasis of the Epistles is brought out by the state of the people to whom they were written. And this principle of adaptation is a well-known fact in the development of doctrine. Here a latent truth has been brought to its full place, there an old form has been modified or carried to its logical conclusion or given a new application.

The thought of the time in other realms, the new truths or errors of doctrine and life, have brought out one by one the development of Christian truth.

sharply defined thought and had little sympathy with a man half idealist and half mystic, with any conception, however great, if it were dim and vague. And he once said, when a dense fog had spread over London, that Bishop Westcott must have opened his windows at Westminster!

There can be no simplicity without a worthy amount of thought. There is such a thing as fatal fluency of speech, a love of speaking for speaking's sake. There is a fascination in standing before men, conscious of a certain power of mastery. There is a charm in the rhythmical flow of words, in the subtle modulation of voice that seems to bear no inseparable relation to the message. It was said that if George Whitefield only spoke the word "Mesopotamia," the audience would exclaim that an angel from heaven had spoken to them. And such a gift carries with it the subtle temptation to speak before God has spoken unto us.

Who has not felt after listening to the abuse of the holy power of speech as if preaching were almost worthless! It is Shakespeare's satire on "words, words, words!"

"Why did you speak so loud this morning?" said the young Henry Ward Beecher to his father.

The very familiarity with the general features of the Gospel may be a hindrance, not a help to simplicity. Truth must be put in sharper, clearer, more distinctive forms of expression that there may be intelligent hearing, that the particular phase or relation of truth may not be confounded with something else. Singleness of thought and singleness of aim and the disciplined speech that shall make truth vocal give to simplicity its importance and force.

How shall we gain simplicity of speech? I say gain, for, in the best sense, it is not a gift, but an attainment, a long, patient, laborious discipline of life and of speech. It is both an intellectual and moral and rhetorical product and comes from the union of all these elements.

Simplicity of thought lies back of simplicity of speech. Not theological uncertainty, not conflicting views of truth, but that singleness of thought which is called by Paul the "simplicity toward Christ." Clear thinking lies back of clear style. If a man's thoughts are hazy and obscure, lacking in sharp outline and well-defined relation, the expression must partake more or less of the same lack.

Canon Liddon was a man of clear and

ing to instruct and win men and not to please ourselves. And therefore our style is not to have the odour of the study, the exclusive tone of culture, but the qualities that shall win their way directly and easily into the thoughts and sensibilities of men. In the preface to the life of Dr. John Hall, his son, the biographer, says:

"He gave his life for his generation. He sought no reputation as either a theologian or a man of letters. Indeed he deliberately turned away from work great gifts fitted him to do, for that which he deemed more important; the calling of men to life eternal in Christ Jesus our Lord. The purpose of these pages is to prolong a little the savour of his memory, to interpret, however weakly, the sincerity and singleness of aim that marked the man, to a generation that needs inspiration to simplicity."

We need, then, to keep the people constantly in mind in our speech; the whole people, not a few favoured ones. We must reckon with a good deal of mental inertia on the part of an audience. What is not understood readily will not be understood at all. And where there is a failure to understand, the mind begins to wander, and so important truth and hard study are lost.

express these truths accurately and convincingly.

What are the reasons for simplicity of speech? The pulpit has special need of simplicity; simplicity of thought and simplicity of style. And unless the preacher realizes its importance, and thinks about it and tries in every reasonable way to make himself fully understood by the people, he will fail in this primal and necessary virtue of the pulpit. And if he fails there, the failure is radical. No matter how much energy and earnestness he may put into single expressions and into his delivery, no matter how much beauty there may be in single parts, if the people do not fully get the message, the preacher is not in the best sense a teacher of truth. One of our weekly papers has recently published a striking article by an elder, setting forth a plea for "a chair of simplicity."

We ought to realize that what may be clear to us as trained men, acquainted with the thought and style of books, and familiar with the special discussions of theology, may fail to convey clear, distinct impression to some of our hearers. We shall have as well-trained men in our audiences as ourselves. And the plea for simplicity is no plea for weakness. It is the plea that we are speak-

is like the river, with its thousand springs in the mountains. But both carry the simple water of life.

Horace Bushnell suggests that words may not wholly reveal. The best speech is not a perfect instrument. There is always more in a man's heart than comes to his lips. And life is not as common and plain as the garden walk. Life sometimes shades into mystery as the landscape shades into the distant blue, and simplicity is not violated if it convey the infinite reach of truth and make the soul reverent before what it knows as reality but cannot see to the utmost verge.

But — the *ideal* of all writing and speaking is simplicity. It might be called the truthfulness of nature. Mr. Charles Dudley Warner has said that it was the immortal element in literature. And we know that when men speak in this way, it has been gained at a great price. To think truly, to have genuine feeling concerning the truth, and to speak so that men may see and feel as we do — this is the highest art because it is coming back to nature, the childlike spirit of simplicity.

All true education tries to do three things for us; to help us see things as they are, to draw just conclusions from them, and to

the way he is doing it, and think only of the message.

Three contemporaneous London preachers were thus described. The first made you feel what a wonderful man he was; when the second spoke you were lost in admiration at the way truth was unfolded. You said "What a wonderful sermon!" But when the third spoke you soon felt your own need and what a wonderful Saviour you had. Was not this the simplicity that was toward Christ?

Simplicity of speech must be a relative matter. It must have regard to the truth, the person, and the audience. The truths of the Gospel are not alike. Some make their appeal to the commonest thought and experience, and others are reached through imagination or some height of spiritual attainment. To talk to some people of the fragmentariness of life and the unifying power of faith would signify little. They do not think in universals. Everything is personal and concrete. While others would find the very answer to life in such a message. And simplicity of style is not a fixed matter, to be reduced to definite laws of words and sentences. The great, rushing flood of Phillips Brooks is no more like the straight speech of Mr. Moody than the water-main

from its clear shining. Simplicity is being true to one's self and the truth. It is doing everything for truth and nothing for show. It is to serve men and not to please self.

It is something more than clearness, though it is not always easy to tell just what the something more is. It is clearness — there can be no simplicity without clearness — but clearness with an added grace. It is the added grace of humility that keeps self from holding or deflecting the pure rays of truth. It is the added grace of beauty that so presents truth that it shall win its way. I find a definition in a recent *Outlook* in an article on "Givers of Good Music." It says of Mr. Hugo Heerman, the concert master of the new Cincinnati orchestra, "Few violinists of the day equal Mr. Heerman in musicianship. As a soloist he makes no display. When he comes upon the stage, he appears like a quiet, studious German professor, and when he plays, he plays as if he were not thinking of himself or his technique or even of his instrument, but only of the music; and he plays so that the audience forgets everything but the music too." That is the simplicity of playing, and the simplicity of speaking is so that the audience will forget the speaker and even

LECTURE XI

Simplicity of Speech

I have been speaking in these lectures of some vital elements of preaching; they are spiritual qualities, not external; they belong essentially to a man's conviction and sympathies and conduct. It cannot be said often enough that the man makes the preacher. And I am not departing from this principle when I speak of the way the truth and life are spoken. Style is vital. The Frenchman long ago gave the truth its sententious form. Simplicity of speech is something vital. It has a living connection with the preacher and his work.

What is simplicity of speech? It is the exact correspondence between the world within and the world without; between the substance and the form of the message, between the thought, feeling, and purpose, and the expression of them. One can go deeper than this and say that it is to hold truth and speech with clear-grained sincerity; to spare no pains to find the truth and to follow its leading, and to remove all obstruction

LECTURE XI. SIMPLICITY OF SPEECH

II Cor. 11 : 3. "I fear lest by any means your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is toward Christ."

Matt. 5 : 37. "Let your speech be yea, yea; nay, nay."

and teachers of the ignorance of men, you must grasp something which is sure and changeless. You must be ready to speak with modesty, but also with conviction and moral earnestness. We may not, we cannot, claim to satisfy all the doubts, and to solve all the problems, which beset the minds of men of our generation, but we may have, notwithstanding, a clear and assuring word for their hearts and consciences. For this we need to go back to the simple and spiritual attitude of the childlike in heart. Our glance must never be only around us. We need to look upward and inward if we are to bear any true message to those who are around us. Whatever confusion may fill our minds, in God who is the Father of all, in the Son in whom is redemption for all, in the Spirit by whom all may be sanctified, there is no change.

"There are truths and spiritual principles which do not change. We must lay hold of these principles if our message is to be a real and assuring one to men who live in the midst of so much that is liable to change." (Dr. Boyd-Carpenter.)

Christ is the Eternal Contemporary and, when truly presented, he will not fail of meeting the deepest needs of men.

VI. We are to speak the truth *that is ageless.*

The real problem is how to lift men above their times for spiritual use, to give men elevation and outlook. The true historic spirit will help to this. No age stands alone in its life and in its problems. It is only one phase of the continuous life of the race. We need to cultivate the historic sense of religion, to get rid of the feeling that we have discovered truth for the first time. The past is true and lives in all that we know and feel. Other men have laboured and we have entered into their labours. And the faithful ones of the past do not receive the full promise. There is a unity of faith that demands our contribution — "that without us they should not be made perfect."

We need to feel the unity of life and the unity of faith. And through the ages the living Christ stands alone fitted to the power of an endless life; he alone is found worthy to open the book of human destiny. Unbelief comes through the forces of life and can be met only by a truer, greater life. The person of Christ meets the need of every age. Here is the chance of growth, without the weakness of faith. In him is stability of truth with the progress of life.

"If you are to be ministers to the sorrows

special form that John gives to it, the deepest philosopher of faith. "Hereby perceive we love, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." The Cross is the principle of the helpful life.

Let us always follow the *constructive method* in presenting what may seem new views of truth. Truth is for life, and you are after lives. It is not the question of liberal and conservative so much as the spirit and method of the man. If the preacher has the patient, truth-loving qualities of the genuine scientific spirit, if he is humble and devoted, without pride of opinion and lust of power, intent solely on truth for the soul's sake, he can be trusted, he is under the spirit of God. "I would not disturb the most superstitious faith if I could not put a better in its place." (MAURICE.)

And let us try to turn the new knowledge and experience of the age to faith. To show the presence of God in the life of to-day, to help men to see that the plan of God is being unfolded in the work of scientist and philosopher, statesman and toiler, — that all life is in the plan of God and will in the end reveal Christ, — is true preaching to the age.

And we must speak truth in the form that the age will understand and receive. Men are studying life and the relations of life, and there is faith in the common man. Biology, sociology, democracy, are forms of the age-truths. And these facts must color and shape the truth, if we really preach to the men of our time.

Take the doctrine of sin. It is not enough to discuss it as our fathers did. That may not be enough to convince of sin and bring to the life of genuine faith men whose private life is irreproachable, but who are guilty of the gravest offences against the well-being of the many. "Sin and Society" shows how the sense of society must give a new and deeper sense of responsibility.

Or take the doctrine of the Atonement. In an age that dwells upon faith and conceives every truth, not as a matter of plan and outer word, but of vital inner relation, it is not enough to speak of the death of Christ as a plan of salvation, and faith as a transaction. It must be presented as the law of life, as the personal relation of God to man, and illustration of the principle of all life, God and man under one divine law.

That's the way you will find it again and again in the New Testament. That's the

doubt the possibility of spiritual truth and the genuineness of religious experience.

Should not the emphasis be placed in our preaching more on obey than believe? Should we not try to awaken the moral sense by demands upon it? Correct views of Christ and the doctrines of grace are not unimportant, but the primary matter to men of our time is ethical, — it is the attitude of the inner life to Christ's ideal of life. And the moral conditions of faith should be pressed with all the force and persuasion possible.

Closely allied with this is the practical apologetic of religious and philanthropic movements. A wise teacher said to a young minister that if he were in the pulpit he would preach once a Sunday on some truth or duty of the Christian faith, and then the second time give some example of the practical application of the truth to life, the biography of some noble Christian leader, the study of some missionary or social or philanthropic effort. This meets the practical test which men are demanding of every sphere, and equally of religion. To show that Christian faith is an effective life, leading to the noblest character and to the welfare of men, is preaching to the need of the age.

Absolutism in the Church led to the assertion of the freedom of the conscience and the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Absolutism in the state led to the new assertion of the sovereignty of God. Against a formal and lifeless orthodoxy and a practical and hopeless paganism came the new emphasis on the grace of God, able to reach the downmost and farthest man. The humanity of Christ was urged in an age that had exalted him by theological speculation beyond the reach of life. And the fuller expression of the love of God came from an age that was marked by new humanity. In a day of growing social consciousness we are finding a larger meaning of duty in the message of Christ, the social implications of the great Christian truths, and in his life and sacrifice the dynamic for the larger ethical demands.

We must speak truth to the need of the age. Our emphasis may well be frequently over against the special speculative or practical difficulties and errors of our age.

It is certain that our age is placing great stress upon secondary causes. Everything is traced to natural law, and a materialistic and fatalistic philosophy practically governs the thought and lives of many men. They

"Oh, I always holler when I have little to say," was the witty and laconic reply.

I believe that a serious danger to simplicity of speech lies in the common feeling that a minister must always have something to say, and that he must speak so long whether prepared with helpful thought or not. Every man has a mission in teaching the dignity and worth of speech, that words are to be symbols of realities, that a sermon is to be a message of God, — the words to be used solely to convey the truth and impressiveness of the message.

Vagueness of thought is fatal to simplicity. If we are trying to express what we but imperfectly understand ourselves, trying to picture that which seems to loom large and uncertain through the fog of lazy, weak, and illogical thinking, the result must inevitably be a dim and imperfect style. A man should form the habit of close, consecutive thinking upon a subject without the use of the pen. It is a mistake to think that the mere use of the pen will shape obscure thought into simplicity. The lazy habit of beginning a sentence without knowing how it will end injures the singleness and simplicity of thought.

Then there are men who affect profound

thought. They are never simple preachers. There are profound thinkers who have taken no pains to make their thought simple in expression and so intelligible to common minds. Bishop Butler is an example of this in his great "Analogy." Robert Browning, though the profoundest master of the human heart since Shakespeare, is almost a cryptogram to many readers, and numerous are the witticisms at his expense. It is said that Jean Paul Richter was once asked the meaning of an obscure passage. He said, "once there were two who knew, God and Jean Paul; but now God alone knows!"

There are men who speak only for the thoughtful world. To make philosophic and scientific truth popular by putting it in simple and intelligible form is called among the Germans "to vulgarize it," with something of the accent of contempt. But our example of teaching is not to be taken from the world's greatest ones, but from him of whom it was said, "the common people heard him gladly." It is the glory of the Gospel that it is to be vulgarized, brought close to the thought and need of the people. And it should be the ambition of every pulpit to be heard just as the Master was.

There are men called of God to minister

to certain types of mind, to certain tastes and conditions. Spurgeon and Liddon were both simple; each intent only on the truth for life, each having the spirit of moral greatness, the loss of self in the message. Yet each was true to his nature and providential training. The one spoke from his homely wit, and sturdy common sense, and great heart, and touch with common life. The other made learning and culture, a long view of thought and life, give breadth and force to his message. The one ministered chiefly to humble folk; the other spoke to all classes and conditions of men. And each had power by the genuineness of his word, and his recognition of the essential man. Universal sympathy conditions this ministry of truth to the common heart. There can be no great art without it. An authority in musical criticism has said, "An exclusive, contemptuous, undemocratic spirit is a sorry defect in any musician." How much more of him who speaks, not chiefly of beauty, but of character and duty!

It must be confessed that there is at times an affectation of profoundness that is akin to obscurity. It is the weakness of some strong men. The use of philosophic and theological phrases, the terminology of the

schools, that is practically speaking in an unknown tongue; or if the words themselves are familiar, they are a scripture mosaic that deals in general and abstract ideas. The language of religious sentiment that dwells in a mystical realm does not convey a personal and specific truth; neither does the speaking of truth in sententious phrases that sound deep and strong, but if tested are found little more than sound.

The Bible is a treasury of profound truth. It gives the literature of religion as well as its alphabet. It is philosophy and poetry as well as fact and duty. And it is our business to teach the profound principles of the Gospel as well as the easy lessons. And every simplest truth on its Godward side at last shades off into mystery where the eye of man can no longer follow. We can make the profoundest truth simple by clear style and familiar illustration. And it is our business to do so.

We once had a course of lectures in this seminary by President Schurman of Cornell on Modern Philosophical Thinkers and their relation to Theology, — three Germans, Kant, Hegel, and Schleiermacher; three English, Hume, Mill, and Spencer. More difficult subjects it would be hard to conceive, and

yet he made them so interesting and understandable by personal incident and familiar illustration that the audiences grew until they were removed from the chapel to the audience room of the First Presbyterian Church, and the older pupils of the high school were constantly found among the listeners.

It was the power of Abraham Lincoln that he put great principles in a way that appealed to the common intelligence and common sense of his audience. He had the profoundest respect for the average man, and he could not be satisfied until he so held his thought and so clothed it that it found the heart of the average man.

Is it possible to make all truth simple? I answer — all truth as far as we know it. All truth that we ourselves see, and just as far as we see it, we can clothe in simple language if we give ourselves to it. But the language of the pulpit may convey and it ought to convey something of the mystery there is about our life and the far greater mystery of Godliness.

The style of Horace Bushnell would not be fitted to the life of our age. We demand something more direct and concrete and vivid. We do not like to think quite so hard. We

wish to listen without conscious effort. The clouds and the storm sometimes gather about Bushnell's pathway, but there are always rifts into the infinite blue beyond. And it must have been a wonderful training in thought, in reverence and ideality, in the deeper elements of faith, to have heard his word. The language of the pulpit thus serves its high purpose if it helps to teach the lesson of reverence and humility.

The moral qualities of simplicity are in personality. It may be enough to say that a sincere manhood, seeking the truth and nothing else, seeking the true life of men and nothing else, will surely lead to that singleness of thought and singleness of aim that are the moral source of simplicity of speech. An earnest man cannot play with words. He cannot create forms of speech for his own pleasure. He will break through the barriers of prejudice and indifference and find the quickest and surest way to the heart. And the childlike spirit of humility, free from vanity and self-seeking, caring nothing for the praise of men, will suffer nothing to obscure the truth.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the rhetorical sources of simplicity of speech. They are familiar to all readers of good English.

I think the preacher should be careful to use natural illustrations, especially those that belong to daily experience and homely life, and such as rise from the subject as a very part of the thought. And he needs to make a study of words, the familiar word and the exact word. John Wesley's advice to his preachers was full of sound sense, quoting the words of Aristotle, "Though you think with the learned, you must speak with the common people." And there is truth in Vinet's saying, "For each idea there can be but one word."

A recent writer compares Hawthorne with a well-known English theologian. "The latter is the awkward, lumbering gait of the village clown in contrast with the strength and grace of the Greek athlete. The English writer spatters his target all over with bullets, before he hits the bull's eye; the great American says precisely what he means to say, and says it in clear, bright sentences which leave on the mind an unforgetable impression. Who has not suffered under sermons which, because the preacher did not know words, jarred on all one's nerves with their crude colours and harsh discords; or because he had never laboured to be concise, were full of sprawling, broken-backed sentences, which

came to an end, no man knew how; or, because he had never learned to marshal his thoughts in due order, like Elisha's servant 'went no whither'?"

And then the preacher should eschew all exaggeration, the vice of the special pleader, "the vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself and falls on the other." It shows a very small faith in truth to try to make her walk on stilts. We should have Milton's confidence — "Though all the winds of controversy were let loose, who ever knew truth put to the worse in an open and free encounter?"

"The mental and physical restlessness which impress the observer of Sargent's portraits of the men and women of our time, the eager keenness, the total eclipse of contemplation is typical of our magazine prose. We force the note. 'If I don't exaggerate,' says a scientist whose laboratory is justly renowned, but whose popular magazine articles give alarm to his friends, 'if I don't exaggerate, the public will have none of me.' So say the child and the chorus-girl, and all lovers of the limelight and the megaphone."

And what shall we say of the preaching that makes the end justify the means, that uses coarse and flaming speech and manner to tickle the ears of the groundlings, that has

the consuming egotism to think that the Gospel of the grace of God demands billingsgate and vaudeville to win men with immortal natures. It is a piece of impious impertinence in the presence of God, a pitiful confession of lack of faith in the power of truth and in the spiritual nature of man.

The Gospel is never commended by careless or irreverent speech. It demands the purest and best that we can give. No man has spoken straight to the heart of the common man more than John Wesley did. He reached the brutal paganism of the English mines and towns. But England had no truer gentleman in his century. He never thought it needful to vulgarize his message before any audience or to make any concessions to coarseness. And, in our day, no missionary has reached all sorts of men more effectively than Henry Drummond. He could not be true to himself or his Gospel save by the purest speech.

"What concord can the English Bible have with aught that is slipshod and mean? When we remember what manner of book the Bible is, how its words "break into the dull round of common life like a shaft of sunlight on a cloudy day, or a strain of solemn music in a mean street, what can be more

unseemly than the vulgar speech and incredible anecdote which have so often been its ignoble garniture?" (JACKSON.)

"A man's gifts of exposition and exhortation, his knowledge, force, indignation, humor, pathos, lose nothing of their power to move the most unlettered because they are linked with dignity and purity of speech."

There is an undying charm in simplicity of speech. There is an unequalled power in letting truth make her own impression. It is making speech the perfect instrument of the Spirit of Truth. It is an ideal toward which we may well strive. The masters have been great because they have so largely learned it.

LECTURE XII. THE COST OF PREACHING

Ex. 27 : 20. "And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee *pure olive oil, beaten for the light*, to cause a lamp to burn continually."

Luke 8 : 46. "Jesus said, Some one did touch me; for I perceived *that power had gone forth from me*."

LECTURE XII

The Cost of Preaching

"The wrong notion about sermons has led to a great deal of the bad talk which is running about now among both laymen and clergymen about the excessive amount of preaching. 'How is it possible,' they say, 'that any man should bring forth two strong, good sermons every week? It is impossible. Let us have only one sermon every Sunday; and if the people will insist on coming twice to the church, let us cheat them with a little poor music, and a few remarks and call it Vesper service, or let us tell a few stories to the Sunday School and call it Children's Church; but let us not preach twice to men and women; it is impossible.' It is impossible if by a sermon you intend a finished oration. It is as impossible to produce that twice as it is undesirable to produce it once a week. But that a man who lives with God, whose delight is to study God's words in the Bible, in the world, in history, in human nature, who is thinking about Christ and man and salvation every day, that he should not

be able to talk about these things of his heart, seriously, lovingly, thoughtfully, simply, for two half hours every week, is inconceivable, and I do not believe it. Cast off the haunting incubus of the notion of great sermons. Care not for your sermon, but for your truth, and for your people; and subjects will spring up on every side of you, and the chances to preach upon them will be all too few." (PHILLIPS BROOKS, "Yale Lectures," page 152.)

This may seem easy advice from a man with nature so gifted and training so large and rich, but it helps to put before us the cost of preaching. There are certain difficulties to preaching; they lie in the way of all success and must be overcome. The first is suggested by the quotation, viz. the false idea of the sermon.

The sermon may partake of the elements of the highest literary art, but it is not to be regarded as a work of art. It is an instrument for service and not a work for intellectual and æsthetic delight. Mr. Aldrich, when editor of the *Atlantic*, returned the poem of a certain young contributor with the word, "If you had not written many others as good, I would accept this." It was a broad hint to write less and so better. We

must not compare the sermon with any form of literature, though we are to make the sermon as good as we can.

The mental and physical indolence of many men stand in the way of success. One of our Indian ministers in his examination for licensure was asked "What is original sin?" And he answered that he did not know what other people's was, but he knew that his own was laziness. Many a man has reached the dead line long before he was fifty. If a minister fails of the industry and persistence to grow, he has already begun to die. The only lazy line is the dead line.

Dr. Tucker quotes the saying of a keen critic that the two besetting sins of the pulpit are laziness and lying. By lying he means all unreality of life and speech; and by laziness "the disposition or the willingness to do the lesser in the place of the greater duty." Our profession is no exception to the law that success is only to be gained by the hardest kind of work. Mr. Gilder describes Mr. Cleveland as a fisherman. He was always at it; he never gave up. And that is what the fisher of men must do.

Men who do not lack energy and industry sometimes fail of the best work through undisciplined powers. They have never been

trained to consecutive thought. They do not know how to concentrate the faculties upon their tasks.

The long, quiet hours of the study are monotonous and tiresome. They want the stir and colour of life. They are like children who do not love their home, but are drawn by the lure of the street. They must touch arms and go dancing down the pavement. The long, patient thought to follow the writer through one of the New Testament letters; the rebuilding step by step of the world in which a prophet lived and wrote, and so the understanding of his message; the meditation upon the fact of Christ until he lives before the mind a visible glory, in all the splendid invitation and command of his ideal and redemptive life; the effort to master some prophetic mind who interprets God in modern life; the labour that makes the truth grow into the living message, and expresses it so that it shall be real and living for other lives, — this is distasteful and impossible to an untrained man. It is not the question of the schools, but whether the preacher has a disciplined life. It is the question whether the whole man, — body, intellect, and moral nature, the whole personality — can be commanded and used by the purpose of ministry.

The disciplined armies have won the battles of the world. The trained preacher faces his task without dismay. It is an impossible task without God. But the servant knows what to do and how to do it. He says with George Meredith,

> "Life is but a little holding,
> Lent to do a mighty labour."

The body is ready to add to the power of the spirit, the will bends to its work, the mind is alert to receive and give.

There are dull men who are workers, who do the best with their powers, and receive the "well done" at last. God calls his servants from every sphere, and through manifold experience, but every man thus honoured is greatly disciplined in his work. Charles H. Spurgeon took an old, historic pulpit at nineteen, in the heart of South London, but he suffered no man to despise his youth, and grew by the unfolding and devotion of every power he had. God helps those who help themselves is a spiritual law also. The Spirit is the friend of law; his inspirations come to the men who are faithful.

And the demand for disciplined and concentrated energy is found in *the multiplication of duties*. The executive demands of the

modern church through its multiform agencies and activities, the social and civic calls upon the preacher who has the gifts and spirit of leadership, may leave little time and strength for the preparation of the message. A man needs the sense of proportion, putting the first things first, and then the disciplined strength to redeem the time, to make the best use of his powers for his great task. It is therefore well to think of *the cost of preaching.*

All noble achievement seems to be so easy; there is such a joy in it that we do not see the law of sacrifice that governs this too. We look at some great masterpiece and dismiss the whole thought of the work with that easy word — genius. But was it not Leonardo da Vinci who offered the prayer as he worked, — "Thou, O Lord, sellest all good things at the price of labour!" And Longfellow sees the process when he says,

> "In the elder days of art,
> Builders wrought with greatest care
> Each minute and unseen part,
> For the gods see everywhere."
>
> ("The Builders.")

A modern preacher like Dr. George A. Gordon or Dr. Charles E. Jefferson has such insight into truth, such mastery of the in-

struments of expression, that we think it simply a gift. We do not think of the painful, patient processes of attainment, the slow gains in many fields of thought, the increased self-direction for a worthy end; the depth of desire, the strivings of spirit, the devotement of life to the chosen calling. He who is not willing to pay the cost cannot have the power.

"Oh, the painfulness of his preaching," says quaint Thomas Fuller of some noble preacher of his day.

I. *It costs to receive the word of God.* It must be taken out of a dead parchment, from between the covers of a book, and be made into a living word. It must be read from the many books of human life, from the many coloured leaves of nature, and grow into a conviction, an imperative, a passion that shall carry the whole man under its sway. Such a word does not come easily. If it seems to be the inspiration of the moment, there are forty years behind it, to use the well-known saying of Henry Ward Beecher.

It means the intellectual knowledge of the word, the *study* that shall be able to apprehend something of its true meaning. It means the light of other knowledge that shall authenticate and distinguish and vivify the word,

the holding of the Gospel truths as essential and rational concepts of the human mind.

It means the *meditation* upon these truths of redemption; holding them fixedly before the mind, holding the life to them as divine standards, working them out in their relation and application to life, finding their meaning for oneself and for other men. Alexander Maclaren, when asked his method of sermon-preparation, humorously replied, — "it was sitting in his chair and looking at the backs of Meyer's commentaries." All teachers of the race, from Moses and Isaiah and Socrates to the real prophets of our own day, have cultivated the power of withdrawing the mind from the strife of tongues and the confusion of moral things and dwelling upon the essential and eternal truths of God and the soul, as though there were nothing else in the universe.

We must be quiet if we hear those voices of God; not in the earthquake or the fire, but in the still voice that is like silence itself. We must be still if the eye of faith is to observe truths so far-reaching in their results. We must rise above the din and confusion of the local and temporal, if we are to see truths for all men, and feed their hearts with the word that abideth forever.

The foundation on which the great telescope rests must be laid deep down on the rock-bed of the earth, that it may not be troubled by the life about it. The least vibration here may mean thousands of miles difference up yonder.

It means *prayer*, the conscious and purposeful effort to realize the person and presence of God, the removal from life of whatever interferes with such fellowship, the considering of truth and duty in that atmosphere free from earthly mists and distractions, the opening of the life to the Spirit to take the things of Christ and reveal him to us, to lead us into all truth, the seeking from God the answer to the deepest cravings of the heart. "To pray with the heart and the understanding, to believe that God hears prayer and yet verily doeth what pleases him, this surely," said Coleridge, "is the highest exercise of the faculties of the human spirit."

And then to make all the truth our own by honest acceptance and loyal obedience, never suffering any truth to remain a theory, a speculative knowledge, but as in the prophet's vision "eating the roll" that it may become a part of life itself.

"We have to remember that the Word of

God is not merely a collection of truths which can be written in a book and learned by rote. It is not merely a number of principles which require to be applied under new circumstances to different cases as they arise. But it is a vital energy passing from God to man at a given time and in a given place, which may be compared to a hammer that pounds the quartz rock, or a keen blade that severs the ligaments and nerves in the hands of a dissector. For the reception of this word the soul must, to use David Brainerd's expression, be 'drawn out'; it must pass up to God like great feelers seeking nutriment; it must wrestle and strive in its narrow chamber until it is enlarged. If we are determined, if we are persistent in prayer, if we can toil at books and men, always praying, never fainting; if we can tread the desert ways of meditation, always praying; if we can, in humble temerity and with resolution, made firm by weakness, grapple with God, spirit to spirit, knee to knee, hand to hand, — since he graciously permits it — we may hear the still, small voice; we may find truth flowing towards us like the dayspring from the dewy eyelids of the morning, or like the waters which issue from the cool, clear fountains of the untainted rocks; we may speak

to men, not in the faltering accents of surmise, but in the sharp-cut and convincing speech of thus saith the Lord." (R. F. Horton. "Verbum Dei," page 202.)

We are to buy the truth and sell it not. It costs to possess any truth, to make it really our own, so that when we speak the truth it is the issue of life. Bishop Greer speaks of a plagiarism of doctrine quite as evil as the plagiarism of words. "The preacher who goes week after week to some venerable storehouse of doctrine and opens the door and takes some venerable doctrine out, and gives it forth to his people simply because it is taught by his church, without having first, in some sense real and true, made that doctrine his own, is a plagiaristic preacher, and such a preacher is not an effective preacher." ("The Preacher and his Place," page 76.)

And then further on in the same lecture he speaks of a woman whose speaking moves him as few preachers ever do. He does not agree with some of her truths. "But she believes them and her whole personality seems to be saturated with them; and the earnestness with which she speaks is not simulated and feigned, but most intensely real. And it is that real, unfeigned, and deep

personal earnestness which touches me as well as others and makes me more alive" (page 94).

II. *It costs to interpret the lives of others.* There are men of special emotional and imaginative endowment who are able to interpret life broadly and truly from their own natures. And others from a world literature understand the forces of humanity. But no man ever preached well who did not know life well, and this knowledge of life comes from that identification with the nature and needs of men which means the life of self-sacrifice. It may be easy to know our friends; it will not be a hardship to sympathize with those of kindred nature and tastes. But to try to know and win those who care nothing about us, to enter into the life of those of different nature and training and social conditions, — this takes the purpose and persistent devotion that is never without sorrow and pain. To be a man of humanity and not a man of a single intellectual and social class means the sharing of the burdens and sins and sorrows of others. There is no other way to understand.

There are some men who do not know what the other man thinks. There are leaders of thought and service who are fearfully

provincial, who only speak to their class. Powerful conservative interests may check constructive ideas and retard the spiritual good of the people.

"Unconsciously the chair, the pulpit, the rostrum, the sanctum, and the salon are tinctured by the political creed of their element, which is close-knit, positive, and influential." (Ross, "Changing America.")

This striking illustration in political thought of the principle that the eye determines the vision and that the eye is affected by the life of the person, is just as true in religious life. It is often a mark of self-denial to break the bonds of circumstance and feel with "men, my brothers." It is the condition of spiritual leadership thus to identify one's life with the larger world and try to interpret the spiritual meaning of it. It is not a pleasant thing to come into daily contact with coarse and vulgar and selfish men and women; try to find the germs of good in them and help it to grow.

Who that has heard Mr. Frank Higgins, the sky pilot of the loggers, can forget his story of the old man and his dog, that one chord into a closed heart found and made to carry the message of a new life?

Really to know men in their sorrows and

struggles, their hopes and fears, means the ceaseless outgoing of sympathy, which is the most exhausting experience of life. The late Dr. Anson J. Upson, who was one of the most successful and distinguished teachers of his day, gave as his chief reason for leaving the pastorate for the professor's chair, the ceaseless drain of ministering to the afflicted. We cannot stand off and bear the burdens of men at arm's length, or hire some one else to take all the pressure of it. We cannot get used to the sins and sorrows of men. We can never, like the surgeon, make our ministry depend upon the mechanical certainty of our stroke. We must constantly renew the horror of sin. We must feel the defeats and pains of men as our own hurt. "Acquainted with grief" is the striking picture of the burden-bearer. Grief! so various and so intricate! Acquainted! Only by effort, by long and hard process, does one really know. We must get under the load ourselves. Whatever cripples, hinders, burdens, pains my brother man, I must feel, if I help him to endure or remove.

We can understand something of Paul's meaning when he wrote to the Thessalonians, "We were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own

souls, because ye were become very dear unto us." What a glimpse we get of the ministry of the true pastor in the holiday verse of the late John W. Chadwick, when for a moment he cast off burdens and became a care-free boy again!

"And oh, the gleam of the birches' stems,
And the new green of the pines,
And the hemlock-fingers sweeping low,
Till they touched the creeping vines!

"And every bank was studded thick
With wild flowers sweet and rare;
While the ferns seemed made of spirit-stuff,
They were so slight and fair.

"Could it be, I thought, in the world with this
There was dust and heat and glare?
Could it be there was sorrow and hate and sin,
And terror and wild despair?

"Alas! it could; but for this one day
I would live as if it could not;
I would dream that the world from end to end
Was only this one dear spot."

This is how Dr. John Watson speaks of the pastoral work of the true preacher:

"With the true pastor, visitation is a spiritual labour, intense and arduous, beside which reading and study are light and easy. When he has been with ten families and done his best by each, he comes home trembling

in his very limbs and worn out in soul. Consider what he has come through, what he has attempted, what, so far as it can be said of a frail human creature, this man has done. He has tasted joy in one home, where the husband has been restored to the wife from the dust of death; he has shared sorrow with another family, where pet Marjorie has died; he has consulted with a mother about a son in a far country, whose letters fill the anxious heart with dread; he has carried God's comfort to Darby and Joan, reduced suddenly to poverty, and God's invitation to two young people, beginning life together in great prosperity.

"It is exhausting to rejoice or to sorrow, but to taste both sensations in succession is disabling; yet this man has passed through ten moods since midday, and each with all his strength. His experiences have not all been wiped out, as a child's exercises from his slate; they have become strata in his soul." ("The Cure of Souls," page 113.)

And Robertson Nichol says of him:

"The characters, the dangers, and the sorrows of his people were ever in his mind. More than once after his death he was called an interpreter. He knew men so well that he spoke home to them. He knew life so

well that he understood the Bible and could make it a living book. His familiarity with life's tragedy and comedy saved him from cynicism and caricature, and kept him sound and sweet at heart. He exercised a priesthood of love as well as a priesthood of truth. That priesthood of love was fulfilled with constant vigilance, with unsparing labour, and with such a severe self-denial as gave dignity to his whole character."

III. *It costs to gain the power of true expression for the Message.* Many of us know the difficulty of self-expression. We know how feeble our words are to express what is in our hearts. To train speech so that it will shadow forth our thought, so that it will pulse with the feeling of our heart, this is the longest and hardest art.

Robert Louis Stevenson had the supreme gift of taking pains. "I imagine nobody had ever such pains to learn a trade as I had; but I slogged at it day in and day out; and I frankly believe (thanks to my dire industry) I have done more with smaller gifts than almost any man of letters in the world." (Balfour's "Life of Stevenson," 2: 169.)

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain gained his leadership in the Commons by the rapier-like thrust

of his speech, by his sentences that went to their mark like rifle-balls. And he said to a group of younger speakers, "The trouble with you young fellows is that you don't take enough pains with your speeches."

Every one knows the clearness of Mr. Huxley's essays. Language never expressed thought more unmistakably. And they were written over and over until criticism had done its utmost. And that's the way Newman gained his style that has the revealing quality of the light. "I have been obliged to take great pains with everything I have written."

And when our words try to express God's thought, to interpret the person and purpose and love of the Divine Father, we may well exclaim with the prophet, "I cannot speak; I am a little child"; or with another, "I am a man of unclean lips."

We ought to feel that nothing is good enough for the Gospel. The message is the great thing, but surely the garment should not be unworthy of it. It is a monstrous bit of irreverence to deal carelessly with the word, in any way to fail to commend the Gospel by our speech and manner.

Colonel Verbeck of Manlius in an address in this city told of the cost of a Japanese sword. He described minutely the making

of the sword of the old Samurai class. Infinite pains were taken with it; a man's whole life often went to the making of a knight's sword. And we dare not be careless with the forming of the word, the sword of the Spirit.

Dr. John Watson believed that what could be done to make style and manner winsome ought to be done. We know what distinction he gave to his truth, how he laboured to make his message simple and persuasive. Yet he confessed to a lack. "He came to think that he had spent too little time on the form of his sermons. The want of distinction in the case of a speaker dealing with the most majestic ideas he thought a crime. 'It is a species of profanity. It is an act of intellectual indecency.' He said that if he went back he would seek more earnestly a becoming dress for the message of God."

I have spoken of the cost of true preaching not to make it seem so difficult that men will shrink from the task, but to make it seem so great that men will seek divine help and the discipline of life for it. No man is worth much in the Kingdom of God who is not beaten out of all self-conceit, and made to see that in preaching also the way of the cross is the way of growth and of power.

But the man who stands as the true interpreter of the word and the lives of men and comes to this at whatever cost has a sense of privilege in his hardest work, and an assurance of ministering to the highest wants of human life that nothing else can give. The pain of discipline is nothing to the joy of service.

Henry Drummond said that he had had some of the finest joys of earth, — the joys of books and of art, of nature and of travel and sport, of friends and honour; but there was no joy like the assurance that your word had brought the life of faith to men.

LECTURE XIII. THE SENSE OF MESSAGE

I Cor. 9:16. "For if I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel."

LECTURE XIII

The Sense of Message

The sense of message is the prophetic element in preaching. It is the *mark* of the preacher, — the inner witness of his call, the imperative reason for his vocation. Amid the various voices of the world stands the man who claims to speak for God. It is not the question whether the pulpit has declined or not, whether other work has attracted the most gifted sons of the Church, whether other means of teaching are multiplying the work formerly done by the pulpit alone; it is the question of its distinctive claim and authority and influence. The preacher is the man with a message. He believes that he has a word of God, the message of God's presence and working in human life. It is a truth that has found him and masters him; he feels it to be God's truth to his own life, and so he must speak it to other lives. It is an absorbing, possessing, impelling word; it is a "fire in the bones," a "woe is me" in the heart, a "love constraining" on the lips.

All great preachers have had the sense of message, their very greatness, their impress upon the age due to the positiveness and dominance of the message. When Peter and John were threatened by the rulers of the Jewish church and forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus, you remember their answer, —

"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard" (Acts 4: 19).

And this has been the mark of the prophetic spirits through the ages, the mastering, compelling sense of God's word, — Chrysostom in the corrupt court of Constantine, Augustine amid the conflicting philosophies and race-conflicts of the Eastern Church, Ambrose in the growing splendour and power of the Western Church, Savonarola speaking to the heartless, cynical luxury and culture of Florence, — Hus, Wyclif, Luther, Calvin, Knox, voicing the protest of the awakened conscience against a worldly hierarchy, and giving God's message once more to the individual soul. What a line of beacon lights, of men with the profound sense of the presence and will of God! And the moderns who have kept the truth alive, who have

helped to its larger incarnation in our age, have been just as manifestly under the illumination and guidance of the divine word.

"I don't care," said Robertson to a captious critic of his preaching.

"Do you know what 'I don't care' came to?" asked his critic with sanctimonious seriousness.

"Yes," was the prompt reply of the fearless preacher. "He was crucified on Calvary."

When Robert W. Dale grew into the conception of the living Christ, the vision dominated his preaching ever afterwards, as the sun drives away the mists and shadows and floods the landscape. For months he could think of nothing else and speak of nothing else. Hugh Price Hughes, the leader of the Wesleyan Inner Mission, and Bishop Westcott, of the Established Church, so understood how the other half lives, and so felt the burden of poverty and so understood the relation between extreme want and godlessness and misery, injustice and wretchedness, that they read a larger message in the Gospel and taught the social implications of the Cross. And from such men the pulpit has gained the true accent for a social and industrial age.

Mr. Moody was possessed by the thought

that the redemptive power of Christianity was in the love of God. He was so full of the thought that he even stopped a stranger on the street with the striking word, "The grace of God has appeared unto all men, bringing salvation." "Men know that they are sinners," he would say, "They do not believe that God loves them. Only convince men of this love and they will be saved." And the love of God gave light and warmth and power to his speech. It is borne in upon Dr. Jefferson that the Church is too much ignored in the religious life of to-day. Spiritual and religious movements are far wider than the Church and their leaders often fail to connect them with the motive and training that the Church gives. And so he holds up the divineness of the Church and calls men to a new loyalty to the body of Christ.

These are striking examples of the sense of message. And you notice the special emphasis in this sense of message. It is some special phase of the Gospel, before neglected or partially stated, that has become a revelation to the soul and makes the prophetic element and power of the message. Not that the preacher sees only one phase of the truth and so gives an eccentric Gospel. He

sees all truth from one standpoint and so corrects and enlarges the view of truth, and gives the message its convincing timeliness. And so, through the generations, the ever new, ever old Gospel, is unfolding its fulness and divineness.

This truth is the more evident in exceptional natures. Men have the sense of message in proportion to the fulness and vitality of their natures. But every preacher may have the mark of the prophet in some degree. All will hold the essential truth of the Gospel as necessary for their own life and so for all men, and then each man will hold and express the essential truth with the special light or emphasis that comes from his experience and that will fit him the best to serve the religious life of his age.

The sense of message is not only the mark of the preacher. It is also the *justification* of the preacher. There is a professional spirit that is always preaching, always instructing men in their duty, that points a moral from every event of life. Such men always wear the clerical garments. They are fearful lest the world forget they are preachers, and turn every song into a sermon. For such professionals Mr. John Burroughs must have written his suggestive essay,

"Thou shalt not preach." Some things will come without our striving; Nature herself is no mean preacher.

> " Nor less I deem that there are powers
> Which of themselves our minds impress;
> That we can feed this mind of ours
> In a wise passiveness.
>
> " Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
> Of things forever speaking,
> That nothing of itself will come,
> But we must still be seeking?"
>
> (WORDSWORTH, " Expostulation and Reply.")

There are some experiences of life before which silence is the divinest wisdom. The more we speak, the more we darken counsel without wisdom. The more we try to penetrate with our unaided reason, the more impenetrable the mystery grows. The preacher may be as foolish as Job's friends. All we can do and the best we can do is to be dumb before the Lord. Life itself is moral and spiritual, and we may trust men to read what is written there. There are other ministries of God beside the sermon. And it is well that the preacher should let other voices speak, that he should listen before he attempts to preach.

But men will listen and not grow weary to a man who has a real sense of message.

Who ever tires of Thackeray's sermons against the shams and foibles and snobbery of the world! We admit all that the critics may say against the lessening of his art by his weakness forever to moralize, — but we never skip his sermons in the interest of art, but read all the outpourings of this big heart because it breathes the scorn of the base and the love of the good.

There never was so much preaching as now, and people never listened more intently for the true and brave word. Only preaching, as in every age of awakened moral life, is often outside the churches. The preacher may not stand with the sanctions of the Church or use the familiar method of the pulpit. He may be a President lifting up the primary principles of public morality, a Secretary of State, trying to interpret diplomacy in the light of Christian brotherhood, a Governor calling the citizenship of a state to a finer responsibility, an editor or a novelist, voicing the dim and confused strivings of an age, and calling for deeper reality in religion. The preacher is the man of the hour.

"But this modern preaching has shaken off the shackles of the homiletic firstly and secondly, it has escaped from surplice and

pulpit and dim religious light; it has ceased to care for metaphysical formula, and girding itself with the weapons of the time, it sallies forth in broad daylight into market-place and mill and legislature and court, to do battle for the moral ideals of the race. And the multitude throng and crowd to hear it. Preaching out of date? There is more eagerness to hear a worthy appeal to the sense of duty to-day than ever before since Miles Standish stepped on Plymouth Rock." (FAUNCE, "Educational Ideals of the Ministry.")

Men will listen to the preacher with the sense of message. They are always looking for such men. The world cannot live without his word. All the higher interests of life depend upon this message from above. The intellectual life of the world depends upon a vital pulpit in ways it is not always willing to acknowledge. The worth of man as a child of God, the use of his powers in harmony with the highest law, the aim of all achievements, the welfare of man, — has its clearest teaching and strongest support from the Christian pulpit. And the social movement, to give justice and humanity to all the relations of society, where will it find the sufficient motive and bond save in the message of the Gospel?

And the training of the individual life, the gift of hope to the broken-hearted, support to them that are weary, the light of a higher world upon the common things of life, the certainty of the moral meaning of life and the triumph of moral forces, — how can the world live without the prophet's word? It would lapse into barbarism without the open vision.

Ezekiel's vision may be honestly applied to-day. A renewed temple signified a renewed Judaism. The waters that healed all they touched, that made a garden of the desert, that turned the dead sea into teeming life so that the fishermen plied their trade there, flowed from the altar of the sanctuary. And the Christian pulpit is a source of cleansing and quickening influences for the higher life of the race. Religion depends upon its teachings. We cannot magnify its office enough. We cannot do enough to give it honour and power.

Only, let us not measure the preacher by the numbers that listen to him and the popular name he may win, but by the divineness of his truth and the spiritual impulses and the moral changes that can be traced to his word. For this is the *authority* to which men will bow, — not the authority of a church or

a creed, but the authority of a life convinced, directed, inspired by a message whose utterance is as convincing as the light, that awakens the sense of God and the need of God, and leads to a life that bears in itself the sanctions of its truth. "Upon this rock I will build my Church," said Jesus of the man who made the first great confession, "And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." I say again the sense of message is the prophetic element in preaching. How can one preach unless he be sent! How can one preach unless he have a message of God to give!

So, of all the questions about preaching, nothing is more important than this, — *How shall the preacher have the sense of message?*

The preacher must speak so much, he gains such facility by his much speaking, that he of all men is most in danger of idle words. Tennyson waited twelve years for a home of his own that he might be true to his calling, find his own message, and give it a worthy form. That is a keen criticism by George Eliot of a well-known preacher of her day that "he had the misfortune of speaking too early and too easily upon the greatest themes."

The sense of message is no natural endow-

ment of a sensitive and magnetic personality. All gifts can be used in its service, and the highest gifts are not too much for its best expression. But it is no gift of fluent speech. It is deeper and harder than this. In fact, natural eloquence may be its greatest hindrance. "Eloquence," says Dr. Horton, "is a prancing palfrey that the Son of Man rarely rides." Many a false prophet has been eloquent, and many a word of God has come through stammering lips.

It is always to be kept in mind that a man's message comes in some way from his life, if it is a vital message. It is infinitely larger than his life, an ideal ever before him, a banner leading him on, but something that he has found precious and that he is ever trying to attain. And this gives to life its criticalness and to all our experiences their significance. A man is trained in his work. It is the law of the spiritual life that we learn by doing. The clearness and fulness of a man's message comes by living. We are in a world of beautiful and beneficent order. Nothing comes amiss in God's world. Nothing can be ignored, nothing can be excepted. "The past meets us in every turning point of the way." A life of singleness, his "meat to do the Father's will," gave to Jesus

the sense of certainty, and to his word its divineness.

There are some strange and exceptional ways of God's training. How vivid the relation between experience and message in the prophets of the Old Testament. Each man stands out for the individuality of his training and so for the individuality of his word. The knowledge of his people and of Egyptian life, the silence of the desert, and the majesty of the mountains are read in the law of Moses. The tumultuous passions and dramatic experiences of David gave his songs their universal message. The lessons of hard and dangerous toil, the truth under the stars and in the open fields, the contact with life beyond the narrow limits of his own people, are all in the ethical and social message of Amos with something of the inevitableness and universality of the will of God. And Hosea could never have taught the long-suffering and forgiving love of God and made it the appeal of a purer life and loyalty without the heart-breaking experience of his own home.

> "Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
> And doubt his own love can compete with it?" —

The tenderness and faithfulness of God are read in the life and message of every true

prophet. Without the obscure, shut-in years in the little parish of Logiealmond, John Watson might never have trained that power to understand and interpret common life. The song that voiced the deepest experience of the human heart and the deepest lesson of the Cross came from the sightless eyes of young George Matheson. "I have learned more of God since my little boy died than from all the books I have read," was pressed from the suffering, but submissive, heart of Horace Bushnell. The blackness of a fatherless world, the patient loyalty to the most simple and primary fact of duty was in the message of Fred. W. Robertson and gave it a power over minds unsatisfied by the traditional teachings of the day. We do not know what God has in store for us, but we are sure that he has nothing but good. And if he calls us through trying experiences, we will not think of ourselves as the afflicted ones, but get from it the truth of a nobler faith.

The special influence of the times may help to give the sense of message and shape its form. Out of the movements of thought and life, new light may be thrown upon the truth, a new sense of need be felt and a new adaptation of truth be reached. We live in a

larger world than our fathers. The limits of knowledge that have been pushed back by science reveal a more wonderful universe. The thought of man that has grown by study of all the past and by relation to the larger life of the race speaks of a more wonderful being. In the larger thought of nature and of man we interpret anew the mind and will of God. Christ as the most perfect manifestation of God is the interpreter and ruler of all nature, and the law of life for all men. Out of a mechanical world of the past, we are privileged to enter a world of life. What is our larger conception of God? What is our more vital conception of Christ? Is it larger only because more diffused and vague? Is it vital only in the sense that it has the mystery of life? Surely the spirit of God in the study and work and expansion of the world has a fuller truth for us, a new glory for Christ. Shall the spiritual interpretation of our age give the preacher a deeper sense of message and to his voice a clearer and diviner word? Every man whose nature is open and sensitive enough to be impressed, must record that impression in his own experience and so in his own sense of values.

And it should be said that men will find a true sense of message, who have passed

through no trying and peculiar experience, who do not stand where they are forced to feel the drift or sweep of the age-thought. It may be the light upon the common ways of life. To stand in one's place, to meet the daily duties of our calling with cheerfulness and enthusiasm, is the assurance of a growing conviction of the worth of our calling and the increased clearness of its message. The path of duty lies mostly along the valleys, but it will climb now and then the hill-tops where the wider vision is had, where the past is understood and the future unrolled before the eyes. And he is surest of these moments of revelation, of the sense of message, who is most consistently given to the tasks of the daily journey.

How shall the preacher have the sense of message? That involves processes, habits, that are common to all men. The sense of message is *intellectual and moral* in its source.

What has the sense of message to do with the intellectual life? It comes from such a study of the Bible and the questions of religion that the great message of Christianity shall be simple and clear. Dawdling over papers and current literature will never give it. Strength consumed in parish machinery will never give it. The Church needs more

prophets and not more priests. Only the steady effort to master the great books of religious experience will help a man to see truth clear and see truth whole. A preacher's library is the index of his attitude towards the message; his intellectual methods the revelation of his shallowness or the depths of his spiritual life. Many things may be unknown. His foible will not be an easy omniscience. His strength will be the expert knowledge of the supreme question of life. Nothing but honest, hard, self-denying study can give a man the grasp of the central, essential truths of the Gospel. We should have more prophets in the pulpit, if men took more time to find the word of God.

The sense of message comes from a knowledge of *life*, from what men are thinking and doing to-day. It will be a present message and not the faint echo of other voices. There can be little isolation to-day. So the preacher fails of the nobility of his work who speaks to a fragment of man, or to a narrow group of natures and conditions. The pulpit sometimes fails to know the real difficulties of life, the many obstacles and ways of faith, the real processes of the human soul.

The preacher may not go beneath for-

mularies and creeds to what is actually taking place in the soul. He may not have a message to life. To have this touch with life, this sense of message to the men of his own age, he must be alive to the thoughts and interests of men. Whatever will interpret the age, the air that all men breathe, and in which they see and act, whatever will unlock the secret of any heart, — that he will strive to know, — philosophies, sciences, poems, the day's work, — these may be vital to his message as well as his Bible and theology. The one will help the other. On his voyage to Australia for his college evangelism, Henry Drummond took a complete set of Browning. And he wrote to a friend, "None can approach Browning for insight into life, or even into Christianity." A young country pastor, who was getting a strong grip upon men, recently said, "I am studying agriculture just now as much as theology." The prophets of all ages have had this spirit. The Bible is the book of life, and its interpreters must know life.

Not until the knowledge of truth and life becomes the personal possession does it have the *moral quality* of message. The preacher must be a witness before he can be a messenger. The most effective message may be

the testimony of life and speech. Not until he finds the truth precious, can it be a word of life to other men. Study gives it form. Experience, call it prayer, meditation, the resolve and effort to be doers of the word, fills it with life. Experience is the element that makes truth transforming, that gives it the accent of certainty, the spell of authority. Such a man will have something to say. He speaks out of his own life the message he has received, with the profound sense that what he has to speak men need to hear. The great message will be known and felt and applied every time he speaks to the actual life of men.

What will this sense of message do for the preacher?

(*a*) It will be the teacher of *effective speech.* There is nothing like the sense of message to give definiteness and purpose to the work of the pulpit. And purpose is the fashioner of style, clear, vivid, personal, practical. If a man has something to say, that he must speak, that he is profoundly convinced men need for their life, if he has something definite to gain by his speech, then he will find a way to say it, the message will compel training and command the obedience of language and person. Nothing is suffered

to interfere with the purpose. Nothing is of use that does not convey the message. Nothing shall be unused that may express the message. There can be nothing vague and diffused like the electricity of the atmosphere; truth must be brought to the point of light and power.

When Dr. Robert W. Dale was giving his lectures on preaching at Yale, he was asked by the faculty and corporation of the university to speak upon English politics. He was a great citizen as well as preacher, and had stood upon many a platform by the side of Bright or Gladstone, and driven his own conviction into the conscience of Englishmen. But the presence of strangers, the critical atmosphere of a university, the uncertainty of their knowledge and sympathy, made Dr. Dale hesitate in his speech. This great public speaker seemed almost dumb before his hearers. He seemed to be straining and struggling for utterance. But at last his rich experience of English life, his rich understanding and love of their history, the great watchwords and leaders and aims of his party, took possession of mind and heart, drafted every power into use, and made the whole man vocal of his truth. It was as though some vast volume of water, held back

by the work of man, had at last broken through its barriers and swept all things with it towards the sea.

The sense of message is the discipline of sincerity and reality. It will give singleness of thought and purpose; the distinguishing marks of Chalmers and Liddon and Maclaren; of Bushnell and Beecher and Brooks. Alexander Maclaren said to a visitor, discussing his knowledge for half a century of the English and Scotch pulpit, that the subtlety and over-refinement and vagueness of certain younger preachers of the Scotch church, compared with the distinctness and passionate directness of the best English preachers, he felt, was due to the weakening of the sense of message by the too exclusive attention to critical and literary studies.

(*b*) *The sense of message gives the personal quality to speech.* It is born of personal vision and the sense of personal need. The preacher puts his own life into it and so gives life to others. There is no way in which the person is so subtly interfused with the word and vitalizes it. "It was real preaching; it made me feel so uncomfortable," was one way of testifying to its power. "Whether Augustine knew truth for all men, he knew the sin of all men and had grappled with it

in a death grapple as that worn and marred face powerfully indicated."

(*c*) *The sense of message gives the courage to be true.* It is not an easy matter to speak the truth. There is always the cautioning voice that comes from the thought of one's imperfect life. There are besetments about the pulpit that may stifle its freedom. Shall it speak what men expect? what suits their religious and social views? Shall it lull men into a low content? Shall it have the optimism of the ostrich, burying its head deep in what is and refusing to see what is to be and what ought to be? Shall it keep men in ignorance of the highest truth, or of what their own lives ought to be in the light of it? There are many reasons for modifying truth and emasculating the force of the sermon.

"There will always be a demand for smooth things, and an appropriate reward for him who is willing to supply them in the name of God. Popularity is a thing which will always be coveted; and under certain conditions it is a thing to be thankful for. If it means that the truth is prevailing, and that men are yielding their minds to its sway, it is a precious gift of heaven. It is a good thing to see many coming out to hear the word of God, and to both preacher and

hearers there is a great deal of exhilaration and inspiration in a full church. But popularity may be purchased at too dear a rate. It may be bought by the suppression of the truth, — and the letting down of the demands of Christianity. There will always be a demand for a religion which does not agitate the mind too much or interfere with the pursuits of a worldly life." (STALKER.)

But the preacher is not his own master. He is the sent-man. He has a given word. He cannot really believe the truth unless he is faithful to it. He cannot really love men unless he is faithful to them.

(*d*) *The sense of message sustains the fervour of preaching.* It is the routine of life that is so deadly for many men. It is the long dead level that takes the heart out of them. What new thing can be said upon this old truth? How can men be made to feel the truth when they have grown so callous by its common handling! And so the glory of the morning fades into the dull gray of the long day. When the fire burns low and the word drags heavily, as it will sometimes with the best of men, the sense of message will keep a man at his task, and shed the light of a higher world upon it, and connect it with the final victory of the truth. Moral

greatness is the moving among common things with a sense of their divineness.

(*e*) And here to sum the matter up in a final thought is the very *secret of influence on the manward side.* Men will forget everything save the truth when the preacher is bent on giving nothing but that. Such speech is signed with the Cross and has the attractive power of the Cross. Men forget everything, even time, when they listen to a man who puts his very life into his message. It breaks down opposition, penetrates dulness and indifference, and produces conviction. It quickens moral sluggishness and energizes life to divine purpose. Nothing would so stir the mass of indifferent, half-hearted, worldly Christianity as the renewed sense of message in the pulpit.

LECTURE XIV. POSITIVE PREACHING

II Corinthians 4:5. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, our Lord."

I John 1:3. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

LECTURE XIV

Positive Preaching

We must be impressed with the positiveness of the Apostolic teaching. It is the key of all the addresses, the note of all New Testament writings. They were certain of one thing: that Jesus was the Messiah, the realization of Jewish history and hope, that God had spoken through him, that his death upon the Cross brought forgiveness, that he triumphed over the grave, that he was the living Lord, the giver of new life to men.

They held these truths as facts, in a simple, untheological way, — they were slowly shaped into the great creedal forms by Greek thought and Roman law, — but they were unmistakable verities to the early preachers. They believed them with all their hearts, they gave their lives to them, they staked their all upon them, they went everywhere preaching them, and they spoke in a way to convince men of their authority. They are so certain of the truths, they are so bound together as one thing in their minds and lives,

that they call it "The Word," and their enemies call it "The Way."

With what accent of certitude do they speak!

"Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:26).

"This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:32).

"Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins" (Acts 13:18).

"Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

"Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11).

"Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).

"Walk by the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

"I know him, whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

"We did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (II Peter 1 : 16).

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you" (I John 1 : 3).

"Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3 : 16).

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (I John 5 : 20).

These men had a message. That was the characteristic of their speaking. They were certain of their message, and they always spoke with the accent of conviction. They left men in no doubt as to their conviction and as to the meaning and claim of their message.

1. This positiveness is the mark of all great, effective preaching. A Leo the Tenth may keep up the splendid shell of the Church when the heart of its faith is eaten out and the priests' quips may elevate the mass. But

a Savonarola comes with a faith as strong as life itself and lays bare the hollow mockeries of religion and calls men to the realities of the Gospel. Luther forces the thought of men through all ecclesiastical machinery to a living person and makes faith in that person the soul of religion. In an age that had become cool of head and cool of heart, sceptical of religion and sceptical of virtue, above all sceptical of itself, John Wesley believed in a Christ, able to save unto the uttermost, and he preached this mighty Saviour with a conviction and a passion that laid its redeeming power on men in the uttermost depths of sin. And in the time of the questioning spirit, born of the new sciences and the philosophies that come from them, when there seemed no certainty in religion and no foundation of morals beyond the variable word of human experience, men like Phillips Brooks have proclaimed the Gospel with an essentialness and inevitableness that awakened the sense of sonship and won men with the glory of the spiritual life.

2. *What is the source of positive preaching?* It comes from *personal experience.* "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." "I know in whom I have believed." "That which we have heard, that which we

have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the word of life." A man who really prays does not long remain without proof of the power of prayer. He may not answer the philosophical questions that men may ask concerning it, but he knows that he is a better man for his prayer, and that his own faith impels him to ask for others the spiritual blessings he himself receives. That experience helps him to speak with the accent of certainty. He no more doubts prayer than he does his own being. He could not live without it. And so he speaks of the truth of prayer with the positiveness of experience.

And it is the same way with any other religious truth. Cold, selfish hearts that have been broken into tenderness and repentance by the sacrifice of Christ do not doubt the power of the Cross. Men who have given way to their evil passions, who have felt the failure of sin and the shame of it, and then have turned to Christ and felt a hatred of sin and a new power to conquer it, have little trouble with the critical questions concerning the person of Jesus. Such questions cannot be understood save in the light of human need. And the sinner may know the power of the Redeemer.

The preacher needs the calmness and strength of a Gospel based on experience. Books may vary, theories and philosophies change. The mind may be disturbed; not so the life that rests on the unshaken knowledge of experience.

"Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isaiah 28:16).

It must be remembered that this personal experience is *of Christ*, and not simply of self. It is not a consciousness of one's own states of mind and feeling, not an impressionist's religion, but the knowledge of what Christ has done in the life and for the life. The knowledge of Christ has been the beginning of faith and its growth is from that increased knowledge. The authority of the preacher is not external, from a church, a creed, or a Book. It is inner, in the man's personality; his personal experience of the truth. But it is not inner in the sense of being solely the preacher's subjective states, his thoughts and feeling. The authority is also objective, the message from the living Christ. The message has helped to make the person, and the person is of use as he gives the message.

It is often said the man counts to-day and

not what he believes. It is one of those plausible half-truths easier to make than laboriously to find the whole truth. "No man has any right in the pulpit in virtue of his personality or manhood in itself, but only in virtue of the sacramental value of his personality for his message." (FORSYTH, "Positive Preaching," page 60.)

"It is not our experience we preach, but the Christ who comes in our experience. We preach not ourselves, but Christ." The Cross is the message that makes the preacher.

The positiveness of our preaching depends not on how much truth we preach, but on how thoroughly we believe what we do preach. The Christian agnosticism which marks the thought of the present pulpit about some doctrines that were very much preached by our fathers may be a sign of humility and sincerity if they lead to the certainty of a deep experience concerning the one thing needful. The outworks may be abandoned if the central fortress is impregnable. "Our creeds," says Dr. Parkhurst, "have got to come from out of our experience of God and not out of our prayer-book or our confessions of faith. Creed is experience trying to put itself into forms of thought. Putting on leaves does not bring the spring, but the

spring coming puts on the leaves. Creeds will be right enough so long as experience is right and fresh and strong." ("The Blind Man's Creed.")

If our personal experiences of life and truth are deep enough, if we refuse to live in books and theories however hard and thoroughly we study them, if our purpose is "ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," trying to help men to live and so keeping our faith as salt and light, we shall never have a false adaptation to our age; we shall never dim or diminish the essential and eternal word of redemption.

3. *The need of positive preaching.* Any true reading of modern life will convince us of the need of *constructive work.* Many of the old buildings had to be pulled down. They were badly worn by time and new forces, — too badly out of repair to be safely remodelled. The foundations of others had to be relaid, that a safer, fairer structure might be reared thereon. But that men badly need homes of the soul, I am sure we must feel. Scientific thought has rendered the ancestral home of faith seemingly impossible to many thoughtful and earnest lives. If man is the product of so many generations, if so many subtle and complex forces of en-

vironment shape him into being, where is the place for God's gracious work, or for the freedom of the soul? And so many reverent minds think they are compelled to say, "We do not know," to the question of a personal God, and his grace in Christ and the immortal life.

And the scientific thought that has quickened and directed the historical and critical spirit to the origin and growth of religion has inevitably given new or changed conceptions of the Bible and the relation of Christianity to the ethnic faiths. In the transition between the old, and we believe a stronger, faith some things have been shaken, and it is no wonder that many think, even within the Church, that all things have been shaken. Among good men there is distressing uncertainty that makes life less strong and triumphant.

And among the rank and file of men there is the weakening of moral restraints, and the following of natural desires. We see enough to know that the entire loss of faith would be the complete wreck of morals.

We see the tendency to make the Gospel either an ethic or a philanthropy. The Christian impulse remains, though the connection with the Cross is slight or sundered.

The theology is largely swept away, men say, but the ethics of Christ remain. It is the highest expression of the moral life of the race, and as such has authority and must be given a fuller application and sway. Or they turn to the imperfect, crippled, suffering lives of a majority of their fellow-men and they wish to help; they say with Leigh Hunt,

> "Write me as one who loves his fellow-men."

But it is a dreadful misreading of life or of Christianity to put the chief emphasis upon ethics or philanthropy. The deepest fact of the world is sin and not suffering. The greatest need is not new houses, but new hearts. Mr. Sidney Webb, the noted English writer on social questions, recently said, "The greatest need is not more power for the people, but to get the people to use the power they now have." That is another way of saying what every man knows for himself sooner or later, — that the real weakness of life is not in circumstances, but within, in the low motives, the unholy loves, the lack of a divine impulse; and here is the power of Christianity. The Gospel is a redemption, and this message must be held and proclaimed if men are to feel this divine dynamic.

4. *What are the marks of positive preaching?*

(*a*) *It is scriptural.* It deals with those great truths and duties that have their clearest, fullest statement in the Bible and their embodiment in the person of Christ. We cannot treat the Bible in a mere casual way, as suggestive literature, the mere inspirer of our thought. It has a growing, distinctive, authoritative message which commands and impels us. We must rescue the Bible from the single text view, as a mere seed-thought for the preacher's inventiveness. We must cultivate the free, large, organic view treatment of its truth, which is best expressed by expository teaching. The very text is a sign of the positivity of our Gospel.

The tendency to make preaching bright at the expense of instruction is no doubt due to the demand of a people who have had little training in religious truth, to whom the Bible is largely a sealed book. And this problem, created by the lack of Bible knowledge in the people, can only be met by such preaching as will renew their interest in the Bible. Scripture preaching requires the great truths, the authoritative statement of them in the terms and spirit of Christ.

Dr. Forsyth speaks of criticism redis-

covering the Bible as Luther did the Gospel, and then how to use such knowledge:

"We must avoid irritating the people with discoveries of what it is not, and statements of what is upset; and we must kindle them with the positive exposition of what it is now found to be for heart, history, faith, and grace. . . . Perhaps you have no idea how eager people are to have the Bible expounded, and how much they prefer you to unriddle what the Bible says with its large utterance, than to confuse them with what you can make it say by some ingenuity. It is thus you will get real preaching in the sense of preaching from the real situation of the Bible to the real situation of the time" (page 166).

(*b*) *Positive preaching is always constructive.* It recognizes the limitation of human knowledge, and that no man or group of men can measure the infinite of truth. It must admit that others who differ may also have the spirit of God and see other sides of truth. It rejoices in everything that brings out and perfects the spirit of Christ. It seeks for the charity that embraces all men in the love of God. It would not force any man's opinion, or do injury to the most sensitive conscience. "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity buildeth up." It preaches faith, not doubt, in a way to support and

create faith, not to weaken the feeblest and most imperfect faith. It would not put a stumbling-block in the way of any of Christ's little ones.

Preaching that is constructive never gives truth as the conclusion of the intellect, something thought out, and finding its completion in the assent of the reason; but something to be lived out, to be proved and found by obedience, true to the life of the soul and the relation of man to man, and finding its verification and realization only in character and the life of society. Positive preaching seeks to present the Gospel as ethicized and socialized.

(*c*) *And, finally, positive preaching is saving preaching.* Its message is the Evangel and it strives to present the message so that it will be a savour of life unto life and not of death unto death. By this sign it can be told from the dogmatic spirit. It does not condemn the world, it does not sit in the seat of the Almighty and decide the fate of men. It has the pity and yearning of the Friend of Sinners. It tries to stand in Christ's place, persuading men to be reconciled to God, and by all the behaviour of life and speech, it would give a persuasive, saving Gospel.

"Preachers will again stand in the pulpit as the messengers of God, rebuking men

boldly for their sins in the name of the eternal, and assuring the penitent of the Divine mercy, declaring with confidence that Christ has finished the work of salvation, and offering that salvation without money and without price unto all who believe. There will be a sure word for the minister to carry to the guilty sinner whose conscience cries aloud in its agony, and a comfortable word for the dying, when they are face to face with eternity. There will be a revival of religion throughout the land which never has come and never will come save by the preaching of the Gospel, which will strengthen the Church throughout all her borders, and revive every missionary and charitable cause in our land. What can never be done by learning or ritual shall be accomplished before our eyes, when the voice of the Gospel is once more heard in its fulness, throughout the land which it blessed in the past and again will bless. We are in the valley now where the shadows lie heavy, but already the East is reddening, and we shall live to see the feet of God's messengers, beautiful upon the mountains, because they are bringing good tidings of good, because they are publishing salvation." (Dr. John Watson, "The Return of the Gospel.")

LECTURE XV. THE MASTER'S METHOD

MATT. 7:29. "He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes."

JOHN 7:46. "Never man so spake."

LECTURE XV

The Master's Method

I wish to close this course on some of the vital elements of preaching with a brief study of Jesus as the preacher. He who gave the message must have something to say to us on how to give it. He knew what was in man, and he knew how to speak to man, and his words called forth the wonder and praise of men. They called forth the best in men. Here also he is our highest example. And while there is so much beyond even our thought in his perfect life, it is well for us to dwell upon the imitableness of his example. What can we learn from the Master's method of preaching?

He certainly believed in preaching. He certainly had faith in the spoken word. He left not a single written word. The only record we have of his writing is the stooping down and writing with his finger on the sand to hide his mingled shame and sorrow at the hardness of men. There certainly never was such faith in the power of speech. He

staked his kingdom on the vitality of the spoken word. He staked his all upon it. The message that was to be the life of the world was trusted to the memory of the few eager hearts that heard him.

The oral method was the chief method of the day. Men were trained to listen and to hand down with exactness what they heard.

We cannot claim that the oral method has the same relative importance to-day; we must rejoice that the pulpit to-day has so many allies, that the Providence of God has so multiplied the ways of teaching the world. But the life of faith is propagated by life, and one unchanging way of expressing life is by speech. That is our calling. And we should gain increased faith in it as the enduring and vital method from the example of Jesus.

Those who heard Jesus speak were deeply impressed by it. Matthew records the fact that the people were astonished at his doctrine, for he spoke "as one having authority and not as the scribes."

I wish that we could think ourselves back into that spring morning of Galilee and feel again the very impressions made by that hill-sermon. Of course, we cannot do that. The word and the speaker so far away have

helped to make us what we are; they are the common thoughts of our hearts; the atmosphere in which we live.

A man speaks to us. He lays his masterful spell over our minds. There is no trick in it, if the sway is true and constant. It is through laws of the mind that God himself has made. How does the speaker have real authority? By the truths he speaks, the way he speaks, and the man that speaks. And in thinking of Jesus as a preacher we must consider these elements blended in his personality.

I. The truth that Jesus spoke was not original in the sense of never having been spoken before. He built on the past; he received from others. The doctrines of God, man, immortality, the Messianic idea, were truths common to the Jewish Scriptures. He had deep reverence for the prophets who had spoken before him. Frequent parallels are quoted from the writings of Jewish scribes gathered in the Talmud. Sentiments approximating the Sermon on the Mount are found in the sacred books of other nations, in the sayings of Confucius and Laotzi and Gautama. But we can well believe that the total impression of Christ's words was something wonderfully fresh and

real and vital. It went right to the souls of men; it awoke echoes of inmost, yet unrealized aspirations; it called up visions and hopes of a new world and yet a world for which they were born. "He spoke with authority and not as the scribes."

While Jesus reverenced the Old Testament, and built his message upon it, he was independent towards the temporary and nonessential elements of that teaching, and he handled with loving fearlessness the current beliefs of his day. He selected and rejected as he saw the truth. He gave his own emphasis to it that made it new truth as much as the touch of Shakespeare re-created the old plays and chronicles of his age. And he spoke out of his own life what no prophet had seen before, that which he had received of the Father.

The people were astonished at his doctrine. They were not used to such *boldness* of speaking. We can yet see the sharp and fearless flashing of these eternal verities. How little he cares for custom and prejudice when they hide God and duty from the soul! He loves men too supremely to keep them in ignorance. The truth shall be declared with all plainness though it may be startling and paradoxical and revolutionary. Men need to

know the truth for through it alone are life and liberty.

Christ speaks his message as primitive, universal, and necessary truths. No shibboleths of party can be fostered by them; no narrow and sectional spirit can come from them. They are for all men and for all time. The highest life can only come from the broadest truth.

And you notice how these truths seem to come forth spontaneously, gushing forth from the great fountain of his life. No doubt in many ways he had to learn them, — the perfect vision did not come at once. But in his speaking there are no gradual and cautious approaches to truth. He knows them as his own life and out of his own life and so he speaks. He does not argue about the person of God. He takes the fact and the faith for granted; everything rests upon it and comes from it; he manifests God. He does not prove the soul of man. He speaks straight to the soul and the soul knows its Master.

Christ does not appeal to the traditions of men, to other great teachers, but to the supreme authority of truth. He laid bare the foundations of moral truth covered up by men. Traditions had turned its life into a

petrifaction. "The sayings of the elders have more weight than those of the prophets," was a maxim of the time. Hillel mispronounced a word because his teacher before him had done so. The foundation stones of the great temple of Ephesus were buried twenty feet deep by the washing and drifting of the centuries. Men had to dig down through the deposit to lay bare the truth of the past. And that is what Christ did. The great spiritual principles of the law had been covered up by the constant accretions of human thought and desire. Christ lays them bare and men see again how firm and divine they are.

And Christ does more than this. He declares a new era. The essential truths of the law shall remain, the eternal and universal principles of right and wrong. But certain forms shall pass away; certain truths adapted to the age shall be superseded by the more spiritual principles. He was the fulfilment of the law. Its truth and beauty and power were to be seen and felt in himself. No longer a law, but *a life*, whom to know is to love and to obey. "All's law, yet all's love." They revered the Fathers; they worshipped their Scriptures. But Christ declares Himself greater than both. "But

I say unto you —" He speaks with *personal authority.*

Christ not only claims the right to change the old and declare new truth; but, as their spiritual King, men are bound to obey his word, and he will stand at last as their Judge.

It becomes us to walk reverently in the presence of Jesus; but may we not say that in giving the message, we are to follow his example?

We are to regard the past, know what men have thought and taught concerning the Gospel, that we may have the true perspective of faith, that we may have the spirit of reverence and humility before the generations of experience. Our faith is a priceless heritage, which we are to touch with no profane hands. The spirit of God has taught the line of noble scholars and devoted servants of Christ, and the creeds of the Church are the best expressions of what they have found true of the Gospel. We need the historic sense; the persistence and the sobriety that come from the unity of faith.

But we can never speak with authority, if we have the spirit of the scribes; if we are content to repeat what other men have found. It will not be true to us unless in a veritable sense we have the discovery for

ourselves, unless creeds and the Church help us to interpret the living Christ, unless each man receive for himself the Word of God.

The conception of the Gospel cannot be a fixed and changeless conception. Its life is in its growth. Each generation brings new problems into the field, new demands upon the truth; and the preacher loyal to his Master will rejoice in the task, and try to understand and interpret the truth that makes the Christ the old yet ever new message, the "Eternal Contemporary."

Jesus spoke to his own people. But twice, I think, does the record speak of his going beyond the bounds of Palestine. And he rarely ministered to any others than Jews. He was literally sent to the house of Israel. This man who first had the world-wide view of religion, who first taught us to think of men as mankind, to whom the differences of race, and tongue and creed are superficial, whose breadth in "Our Father" we imperfectly understand, and whose "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" the Church has so partially obeyed, shut his own ministry up to a small parish.

He spoke to many at times. He had power over the multitudes. The people heard him gladly. But he was never swept by the

thought of numbers. He spoke to Andrew and Levi, to Simon and the woman of Sychar, with the same interest and purpose as to the multitudes that followed him. He was entirely free from self-seeking or false self-assertion. He thought only of truth and the life of men. The desire for the ears of the crowd never affected the grace or the truth of his word. He was a teacher as much as a preacher. In speaking to the many, he had a few chosen souls in mind, the open and eager hearts, the men bound to him by friendship; and these, in public and private, he trained in patience and hope, thus stamping upon these sensitive plates the impress of his own life, and sending them forth to make innumerable copies.

And in his message he is single, — narrow, if you please. He spoke the one truth of the Kingdom of God. Infinite in its application, limitless in its influence, he gave the message to the individual soul. Never in reformer, ecclesiast, patriot, did he lose his single and supreme work of prophet. Dr. Jefferson finely says, in his "The Character of Jesus":

"He made an impression because he stayed in one place and hit the same nail on the head until it was driven completely in.

Had he wandered over the earth, speaking his parables, they would have fallen into more ears, but moulded fewer hearts. By staying in Palestine, and keeping his heart close to a few chosen hearts, he became increasingly influential. The men who were nearest to him became so passionately in love with him that they were ready to die for him. He made himself thus mighty by limiting himself. It is with men as it is with rivers; a river becomes a river only by the assistance of its banks. Take away its banks, and the river becomes a swamp. By limiting himself, our Lord came off conqueror. . . . Jesus attempted to do one thing only, and that was to perform the work which his Father had given him to do. At the end of his life he could look into his Father's face and say, — 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.'"

There is surely a great principle here for every man who would be a true preacher. The largest work in the world can be done by doing the best work for those whom God has given you. The gifts to reach the multitude are to be craved and cultivated, but he does most for the Kingdom of God who so speaks that men will become new creatures and grow unto a perfect man. One man

transformed is a greater work than a thousand men simply drawn to the preacher. "I would rather see one man practising one of my sermons," said Theodore Parker, "than hear all men praise them."

And in this work of changing men the preacher must give the word of redemption. He loses his power if he fails to exalt the one message. The Gospel is as wide as human destiny and touches every interest of man, but it goes to the extremities of human life only through the force of its heart. The preacher must give the heart of the Gospel.

II. Jesus was the Master of the *oral method.* The way he spoke to men is only less remarkable than his message. Dr. Griffith-Jones says, "Preachers and teachers will find a rich reward in entering thus seriously for themselves into the study of the method of the Master, who spoke as never man spake, and who adapted his message to His audience with a tact so unfailing and a wisdom so wonderful that its impressiveness is traceable almost as much to its perfect form as to its divine and saving power."

Five qualities mark the speech of Jesus. It was simple, vivid, concrete, portable, and incorruptible.

It was *simple.* The profoundest truth was

spoken in the speech of every day, and men could not fail to know what he meant. He spoke to no class but to the common intelligence and wants of men. He did not use the language of professional religion, but the language of life. The common people heard him gladly, and to the poor the Gospel was preached. It had singleness of thought and singleness of aim, and everything he said made this known. He always had the sense of God, and his own life was so single and so consistent that everything he did and everything he said, the most spontaneous and unpremeditated, revealed something of God. And so with his sense of the worth of man, — every touch of life, every word to the heart, the whole attitude toward life, the spirit and method of dealing with individual cases, tell what he thinks of man.

Here is the moral condition of simplicity of speech, — singleness of life, — and where this is strong, the simplicity of form is sure to follow. Take Christ's warning against anxiety in the sixth chapter of Matthew. Is there anything more simple and beautiful, too, in the literature of the spoken word? Could any mind fail to get its truth?

And his speech was vivid. It was put so that men felt it. It flashed like a diamond

or cut like a sword-blade. It was a picture, and men saw it. The truth was not dim and vague and abstract, demanding the closest attention and to be received after long and hard process of reasoning, but it fairly stood before them in visible form and colour.

"Ye are the salt. Ye are the light. If the eye be single, the whole body is full of light. Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. By their fruits ye shall know them. He that putteth his hands to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the Kingdom of God."

Was ever clearer, stronger word spoken? There is not an opaque word in it. Every word makes its quickest, strongest appeal to the thought and feeling of men.

And then the style is concrete. Christ makes use of current events, and familiar figures on the street, and well-known stories and popular proverbs and visible scenes to convey the sense of reality in what he says. Somewhere on the hillside men were sowing the seed and he was giving the immortal parable of the sower. A man had been robbed on the Jericho road and in the story of the Good Samaritan Jesus gave such a definition of neighbour that the quibbling

lawyer confessed its truth. Dives and Lazarus, Simon and the sinful woman, the Pharisee and the Publican are as familiar figures as any that walk our streets. How this concreteness stands out everywhere in Christ's speaking! Truth is a life. In him is life and the life is the light of men.

It follows from this that Jesus' speech is *portable*. People carried it away. They could not forget it. Parable and paradox and epigram challenged attention and stuck in the memory. The picture, the story, lives long after the abstract principle is forgotten. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. No man can serve two masters. He that saveth his life shall lose it. To him that hath shall be given. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Largely upon this unforgetable form of truth depend the riches of the Gospel to-day.

The *incorruptible* quality of Jesus' speech I need barely mention. As hatred and opposition grew around him, he was led to veil the thought in parables, the story preserving the form of the teaching unchanged while the truth would be sought by those eager to be taught.

Jesus has taught us as no other that

nature and life are full of God, that everywhere there are symbols of truth for the open heart. No man loved nature better, and none loved man so well. And this wealth of pictorial truth came not only from his full, rich life, but from the love that used all for the service of men. Nothing ministers to beauty alone, but all is the servant of the soul.

The preaching that interests, and instructs and persuades to noble life, must have the pictorial element, the symbolism of nature and of life. And such forms are the inevitable expression of strong natures that think keenly and feel deeply and have the mastering purpose of saving men.

III. There must be one thought more. We can analyze words and manner, but a more subtle element lies back of them, which gives the sermon its final authority, *the power of a life*. The best preaching is a life. Men cannot understand truth until it is put into human experience. Men cannot feel its power save in the touch of a human hand and the pulse of a human heart. There was something attractive, convincing, transforming in the personality of Jesus. He lived the truth that he spoke. He was all and more than he taught. He alone can say,

with simple and matchless humility, "I am the truth!" How can we measure this? What experience of ours is deep enough to penetrate into this mystery?

We can practise something of his fellowship with the Father, we can try to follow his loyalty to truth at whatever cost, we can grow in the supreme note of love for men, which will give insight, sympathy, power. To grow into a perfect man, unto the fulness of the stature of Christ, is the ambition and hope of the spiritual preacher.

The sainted Tholuck, who was the spiritual father of thousands, who spoke in the pulpit and in the school and in the best literature of the century, gave as the single secret of his life, — "I have but one passion, and that is Christ." And Charles Kingsley, who spoke to men as few others of his day, once said to one who asked concerning the secret of his life, one near enough to have the right to ask such an intimate question, — "I have a friend."

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